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# Autobiographical Amnesia: Memory, Myth, Curriculum.

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**Autobiographical amnesia: Memory, myth, curriculum**

**Nixon, Gregory Michael, Ph.D.**

**The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992**

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300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

**AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AMNESIA  
MEMORY, MYTH, CURRICULUM**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by

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*Memory believes before knowing remembers. Believes longer than  
recollects, longer than knowing even wonders.*  
(William Faulkner, Light in August, opening of ch. 6)

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## ABSTRACT

Autobiography in curriculum theory and practice is being more and more acknowledged as a major force leading toward the development of reflectively analytical teachers, reflexive practitioners, and discursively self-aware individuals. I look to two vital aspects of self-narration to explore.

I speak firstly of memory, without which narrative continuity would be impossible. Memory is as involved with learning as it is with storytelling, and I agree with Krell (1978) that "inquiry into memory and the theory of pedagogy go hand in hand" (p. 131). I eschew the models of memory provided by the behavioral sciences, empirical psychology, cognitive psychology, and the memory-as-a-mechanism model of neurophysiology for all these models end-up vanishing into metaphor. I embrace metaphor and attempt a more open-ended approach through phenomenology to the *experience* of memory. I freely employ the literary arts for their evocation of long-term memory (as opposed to the basically short-term studies of psychology).

I maintain that memory is encoded as deep within language as the self and that it leads finally to the primordial narratives we call myths. Secondly, then, myth as foundational to both how and what we remember, and myth as present in the seams between words, is traced through language and the work of archetypal psychology. Remembering mythically is *epistrophe* (Hillman, 1979a). I use such memory and such myth to suggest the insubstantiality of the ego and of the subject which remembers, and to explore the meaning of a memory which must recoil against action to see through the self.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*"The fact is that we have forgotten what memory is  
and can mean; and we make matters worse by  
repressing the fact of our own oblivion."*

(E. S. Casey, Remembering: A Phenomenological Study, p. 2)

**§Approaches.** Someone seems to have noticed that we are plunging into the future without a backward glance. Though we retain private memories, they have come to be structured within larger semiotic memory-forms (Barthes, 1957/72; Lyotard, 1984). Individual memory is absorbed by history, and curriculum becomes drafted into the production line. Such an ethos may well be perfectly acceptable as just another cultural quirk, were it not that the "backward glancing" of memory tells us not just where we have been but also gives us a sense of who we are. Without remembering, we exist only to serve the vehicle of our conveyance which is left, in effect, to choose its own course. To remember memory, two questions must be posed: what is memory and, more importantly, what is the experience of its action?

John Dewey should be given full credit here at the beginning for valorizing the mindfulness of the individual, opening the way to "qualitative" research in schooling and thus to lifewriting in curriculum through his ideas, including that of the organic unity of self and society (1929). Graham (1991) sums up Dewey's pragmatism as, first,

a theory of process based on a notion of activity in which both people and objects are a result of the process. Second, mind or consciousness itself is a social product brought about through the continuous interaction of free agents. And third, all ends are provisional, changing; it is a process that allows, as in classic evolutionary terms, for novelty, and one that invalidates the idea of fixed goals. (p. 49)

Though the ideas of Dewey have remained influential in the curriculum field, in the schools they have been reduced to an undercurrent in the school-as-factory paradigm which gained ascendancy through two world wars and a prolonged cold war (Apple, 1979). Dewey anticipated much of the work being done now in autobiographical curriculum writing, a writing which usually claims continental influences (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). His understanding of the self was never akin to the student-as-empty-vessel syndrome still commonly employed by those who seek to measure success by the accumulated information a student has retained. Dewey clearly opposed "self-discovery" by accumulation in his *Ethics* of 1932:

Except as the outcome of arrested development, there is no such thing as a fixed, readymade, finished self. Every living self causes acts and is itself caused in return by what it does. All voluntary action is a remaking of the self, since it creates new desires, instigates to new modes of endeavor, brings to light new conditions which institute new ends. Our personal identity is found in the thread of continuous development which binds together these changes. In the strictest sense, it is impossible for the self to stand still; it is becoming, and becoming for the better or the worse. (In Graham, 1991, p. 44)

Dewey's realization of the social self does not seem to imply that the individual is powerless; quite the opposite in fact. Compare Dewey's (1929) statement: "All education proceeds by the participation of the individual in

the social consciousness of the race" (p. 3) with that of the last lines of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: "I go ... to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."

Understanding that the self is capable of transformation and not just accumulation, curriculum studies have opened a broad perspective into a variety of qualitative approaches which question the school-industry paradigm (e.g., Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Short, 1991; Schön, 1991; Haggerson & Bowman, 1992). These approaches usually call for more interpretation, less measurement, more description, less generalization, more experientialism, less depersonalization, and more personal involvement. In short, moving from the general to the specific, from the socially standardized to the personal and unique, assumptions about the role and place of memory have become engaged: public memory, professional memory, personal memory, and sometimes even expressive (or "fictional") memory.

It is memory that I wish to explore in this essay. The areas of inquiry that most directly call upon the resources of personal memory are to do with the exploration of the lived realities of the persons who are teachers or students. This exploration calls for the narrativizing of experience, though this narrativizing may take such varied forms as ethnographic inquiry (Janesick, 1991), teacher lore (Schubert, 1991), narrative dialogue (Witherell & Noddings, 1991), teachers' life histories (Goodson, 1988), teacher stories

(Pagano, 1990), narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991), voices of teachers (Aoki, 1990), or, most important for my purposes, autobiography as research (Butt & Raymond, 1989) or methodology (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). The list is incomplete and too abbreviated to be fair to the intent of the authors, but an idea of the variety of approaches may be suggested.

All the above will be referred to generically, when necessary, as “lifewriting in curriculum.” I take the term “lifewriting” from a 1991 seminar with James Olney on “Lifewriting and Memory,” in which lifewriting was used in the broadest sense possible to encompass poetry (T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, 1944), case studies (Luria, 1968, 1972; Sacks, 1985), novels (Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* 1936/86; Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937), and various experimental autobiographies which shall be discussed in a later section. Lifewriting, then, is any writing which expresses, investigates, or seeks a memoried life—whether objectively or subjectively or intersubjectively, symbolically or factually. In autobiography, itself, the question of memory is inescapable, as it is generally taken to be the dividing line between it and “purely” fictional literature, whether memory is construed as historic or aesthetic. I shall suggest that it is also heuristic.

It should be noted that curriculum inquiry often calls on the memory that plays a central role in all phenomenological and hermeneutical discourse (Willis, 1991; Smith, 1991), though this memory may be understood as both personal and social because of the mutual implication of



the personal and social in the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 1975).

Furthermore, as curriculum theory draws inspiration from so many other fields, it regularly assumes ideas of memory drawn from the processor paradigm of experimental psychology (e.g., Ross, 1992), the narrative schemata of cognitive psychology (e.g., Bruner, 1987), not to mention psychoanalytic approaches from Freud (1900/65) to Lacan (1977). The mention of Lacan opens out language itself as a container, or producer, of memory, especially in the fields of semiotics—as found, for example, in Barthes (1957/72)—and linguistics (Kristeva, 1989, among others). All of these traditions will be recalled in later chapters.

### **§Memory, Narrative, Myth: Self, Imagination, Metamorphosis.**

Memory, self, and imagination seem to be entwined in ways that even the most arduous experimental techniques could never disentangle. Of course, definitions could be created within which conceptual data could be made to fit or not to fit. The problem with defining the above triumvirate is that each is so intimately involved with each other and with language that some say they are as much a manifestation of language as language is of them (Lacan, 1977; Kristeva, 1989). Kerby (1991) states that “semiotics ... shifts this whole epistemological-metaphysical debate onto another level by firmly rejecting extralinguistic reference” (p. 10). It is not my purpose to disentangle these terms through incisive definitions and, as I say, I’m not sure it could be

done. But life histories, narrative inquiry, and autobiography all proceed with some notion of a referent—no matter how nebulous or disputable—for each of these terms.

This inquiry into the central concept of memory will proceed through the interpretation of several related concepts which are pivotal to its understanding. The concepts need to be explored in order to understand their substructures of inference. It is assumed that our language today has attained a particularity and complexity which was heretofore unknown (Bloomfield, 1982). Our dependency on an increasingly complex and expanding technological network has demanded a nominative heterotaxis—an abnormal structural arrangement of language—because of the need to continually give new names to the new sub-concepts and “things” emerging from the science industry and hyper-technology. *Language has become such a heterotaxis because for the first time the development of nouns or names has preceded or eliminated the need for verbs.* Philology has demonstrated that previously nominatives usually derived from verb forms, which are still hidden within most the names we employ today (Watkins, 1982). As a result, much of our speech and writing seems to be more concrete and objectively referential than it may have been before. However “practical” this may be, a side effect is that language in general use seems to have largely lost its sense of nuance, the reverberations from the subtle

interplay of meanings within a larger web of inference. Terms become things with a certainty which renders them “inert” (Whitehead, 1970).

This commonsensical view that language “means just what it says” is subverted by poets and other writers of literature who “play” with language—or allow language to play—beyond a strictly referential sense (Frye, 1957). The echoes and implications within speech and writing are employed to point away from concrete understanding to a de-literalized sense of inference. Language is purposefully used to suggest that which is not present (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). Its “meaning” is contained in the subtext of associations from the past—the memory contained within language—or in the deferral of meaning into the future. This sense of the infinite regress or indefinite postponement of meaning seems to be what is implied in the Derridean neologism “difference” (1978). Aside from literary endeavours, it may be that the texts of post-structuralists (and other “post” genres) are the only place to find language being used to consciously to avoid strict reference or to hint at meanings beyond themselves, either in the subliminal awareness of metaphorical sources (Frye, 1957; Olney, 1972) or in the “traces” of memory’s absence (Derrida, 1978).

It is my contention that writing which expects both author and reader to participate in the univocal assumption of meaning through representation of objective referents is more open to misunderstanding and the abuse of mixed messages than is writing which is openly inferential, but not inferring

anything but more inferences. When the author and reader expect certain, specific denotations and connotations, they are more likely to project aspersions on each other when they find their meanings do not agree. In the latter case, meaning may seem at first unclear or elusive until that very elusiveness is felt, in a sense, as meaningful. It is only by returning language (and therefore life) to its "original difficulty" (Caputo, 1987), or to a sense of fluidity (Grinnell, 1973) and process (Whitehead, 1978), that a sense of richness and depth can enliven our awareness of phenomenal reality. This approach accepts the uncertainty of private connotation and mutual meaning may be felt through language's "re-mystification," as in poetry.

A major part of this richness and depth is found in the echoes of the past contained in the words of the present. This does not just imply that there are fewer and simpler base-words at the "root" of our present plethora of referents, but that words reach back to a rhizomatous network which spreads over, finally, the unknown. Heidegger (1987) has said that "language can only have arisen from the overpowering, the strange and terrible" (p. 171).

Heidegger, of course, was a metaphysician who himself spoke the poetry of being and who was claimed by phenomenologists and existentialists alike (Wahl, 1949). He approached philosophy with what Gadamer (1975) called the hermeneutical imagination, seeking out origins. The inquiry into the suggestion that language already has an intrinsic memory is reason to seek memory beyond mind. Furthermore, there are also

memory within the body and the memory of “intersubjective participation,” according to Edward S. Casey (1987b). Memory even functions to a limited extent in matter, as suggested by Bergson (1912) and largely corroborated by particle physics today (Wheeler, 1974; Toben & Wolf, 1982). Could it be that memory is not a mental faculty at all but one of the primordial forces, of existence: “writing’s law of gravity” (Gunn, 1982, p. 5)?

Within the mind, however, memory produces both narratives and images—images implying all things sensory or somehow “felt.” Smith (1991) says of Gadamer that “his hermeneutics supports all of the recent work in the study of narrative and story ... which proceeds from an affirmation of the traceably constitutive nature of human understanding and its roots in recollection and memory” (p. 194).

Aspects of memory, then, are understood to be found in stories, the nature of which leads me to my second central concept: *narrative*. Narrative is seen in this sense as the form taken by the foundational structures of self-awareness (Kirby, 1991), which we encounter consciously through memory, recollection, reminiscence, or reverie (Casey, 1987b). Kirby (1991) straightforwardly states: “The self, as implied subject, appears to be inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits. The important point is that it is from this story that a sense of self is generated” (p. 6).

If words have memories, and memories often have a narrative structure, then the subconscious or peripherally-conscious narrative substructures of those structures can be designated as meta-narratives, as Lyotard (1984) refers to the determinants of culture and tradition; Kirby (1991) calls them prenarrative structures when referring to a less circumscribed, more “primitive” level of quasi-narrative (Crites, 1986). Prenarrative experience is already somewhat determined by the place, time, and traditions of one’s life, and, at a deeper level, by the reverberation of ancient etymological and present phonetic entanglements. It also includes the repressed “unsaid” behind language (Lacan, 1977; Derrida, 1978).

This “unsaid” is the unspeakable of both past and present. It is the stuff of dreams, myths, and madness. Usually held repugnantly away as language’s *derrière*, it is nevertheless as much a creative resource as are the “praiseworthy” official traditions. Kirby asserts that “self-narration is both a receptive and a creative activity, receptive in relation to embodying or expressing our prenarrative experience and creative in the way our conscious narratives inevitably refigure and augment the prenarrative level of experience” (p. 9).

Whether culturally formative, subversively chaotic, or aesthetically inspiring, I hope to reveal these narrative substructures to be identical with what has been called *mythology* (Kolakowski, 1972/1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 1991). As I shall define it as my third central concept, mythology is

composed of myths which have been identified as the aural components of archetypal images (Kugler, 1978; Rasula, 1979). Words and myths “are twin creatures, springing from the same tendency to see reality imagistically or symbolically. Both language and myth are part of the same basic mental activity” (Avens, 1980, p. 88).

These three—memory, narrative, myth—will be shown to be the social components of our concept of self or, to put it another way, the self-concepts which we glimpse objectively: in passing, as it were. The three concepts can be imagined as pointing inward to a postulated essential self, and so to be components of it, or only to imply it through their activities (Kirby, 1991). An image of the self, then, can be said to have been discussed as long as I was inquiring into the three aforementioned concepts. *Self*, then, is the fourth major conceptual question of this study, even if, upon closer investigation, this self seems to waver or disappear entirely as an object of perception (Lacan, 1977; Foucault, 1988; Sprinker, 1980; Lejeune, 1989) leaving us with the sense “that we are not real” (Avens, 1980, p. 72).

This perception of the self, so dependent on the fantasies bred within our cultural framework and the myths we live (Hillman, 1975b; Campbell, 1990), may largely determine our openness or closedness to experience. A *Weltanschauung* does not simply arrive one day; we grow within it and may find the possibility of experience outside of it incomprehensible. Imaginative production may be understood to be channeled by the above limitations, so

that perception is itself imaginatively guided and limited by that Weltanschauung (Heidegger, 1962; Whitehead, 1978; Perlman, 1988). The source of imagination—if such an idea has any sense to it—is then the only “true” subjectivity, though it can only be undifferentiated unconsciousness without the forms supplied by the world (Avens, 1980), including those forms of particle motion and organic instinct (Portmann, 1954/64; Wheeler, 1974). But imagination is understood to be more than a cause: It is that which apprehends through and beyond the body’s perceptions (Whitehead, 1978). As prenarrative combines with creativity to produce self-narratives for Kirby, the mythic *images* of the life-world may be thought to combine with the creative source to embody *imagination*—both public and private (Hillman, 1977)—and this is the fifth primary concept of this inquiry.

Imagination is the wellspring of fantasy, according to the architect of archetypal psychology, and *all* our phenomenal constructions, perceptions, and attributes are fantasies (Hillman, 1983a). These fantasies may, more often than not, be less personal than the archetypal images that a *world-view* views. Hillman understands that the withdrawal (or possibly theft) of archetypal projections *from* the world in our era of objective science has led to the fantasy of an interior region which has been psychologized as the subconscious or unconscious (Freud, 1900/1965; Hillman, 1975a).

*Psychologizing* is identical to what Hillman means by *pathologizing*. The fantasies behind our experiences of discrete phenomena are not all to



be understood as handsome flying horses (imagination taking wing) or wonder-full daydreams, but also as the pathological underside of our daylight hopes. (How similar Hillman's talk of ingressed images is to Lacan's of ingressed speech!) At night, our dreams reveal this death lure, this pathologizing of archetypal contents, as Hillman (1979a) describes:

The imagination at night takes events out of life, and the *bricoleur* in the service of the death instinct scavenges and forages for day residues, removing more and more empirical trash of the personal world out of life and into psyche for the sake of its love. (p. 128)

In the day, our fantasies usually attempt to put the world together in a meaningful fashion, to imagine integrated purposes, but fantasy—imagination—both constructs and destructs:

Imagination works by deforming and forming at one and the same moment. . . . The pathologized or deformed image is fundamental to alchemy and to the art of memory, both of which present complex methods of soul-making. It is the pathologized image in the dream, the bizarre, peculiar, sick or wounded figure—the disruptive element—to which we must look for the key to the dream-work. Here is where the formal cause of the dream is best doing its deformational work, striking its type into the plasticity of the imagination. (p. 128)

This “deforming” of daylight's imaging is understood to be alchemical (Jung, 1971): a reduction first to the basest substance to dismember memory and a potential transmutation through a return to the dark source. This idea of alchemical transmutation—a dramatic shift of awareness—is what I refer to as *metamorphosis* (Ovid, 1976; Brown, 1966, 1970), my sixth and final central concept, and surely the *raison d'être* of lifewriting.

These six central concepts have deep etymological, and psychic roots and are subterraneanly interwoven. In a sense, I have imposed a linear perspective upon them so one seems to lead to another: memory leading vertically downward to the springs of imagination, which, according to Hillman (1979a, 1979b, 1983a) is the realm of soul-making, the depths of soul merging into death. It is in the position of such absolute otherness that metamorphosis is thought to take place. New being now returns vertically upward—*metaphorically speaking*—to emerge in a new world under a new sun. Such new being brings soul into the world—Hillman's soul-making—so it may be paradoxically envisioned as the recuperation of “old” being.

**§Caveats.** This thesis stated so baldly should be open to much criticism: If it is truly new being, with a different sort of memory, in what sense could it be said to be the same person who had begun the process? If the process is seen as a vertical descent, does this imply that each individual, regardless of temporal-geographic-cultural circumstances, has the potential for the same soul-making regression? Are memory, story, myth, darkness (deformed imagination) the *necessary* steps or the exclusive *formula* for this “ritual”? If some souls prefer ascent or horizontality to such an atavistic-sounding regression, must they be understood to be incorrect? If I am quite content with the world out there and my self in here, am I under some compulsion to leave my city and enter into the wilderness?

Sound questions which would destroy the ideation of these six concepts if they were to be taken as literal and necessary. But they are not. At this stage, my purpose has been to state in advance the area and nature of my inquiring, not to proclaim any sort of universal guide to new being. In fact, I hope to show that the springs of imagination are more within the realm of memory than memory in the realm of imagination. "New" being cannot be known from here, if indeed there are such things to know.

Graham (1991) has suggested that autobiography "exists as yet in the mind of the educational community at large in an *undertheorized* state" (p. 2). I wish to sketch the outlines of a memory-theory in support of the varied autobiographical endeavours underway in curriculum studies. However, here at the beginning, I must clearly state what my theorizing, speculating, and conjuring within memory do not imply.

This is not an experimental study with a control group and numerical data collection; memory will not be "designed" from the outside in. This is not a comparative review of all the curriculum theory which has made reference to memory, though representative selections will be reviewed. This is a review of neither all the philosophers' writings on memory nor of all the artists expressing its purview. I am not going to "come into the fields and spacious palaces of ... memory, where are treasures of countless images of things of every manner" (Augustine, 1948) and research the myriad works of historical

autobiographers, though, of course, some of these will be present to some degree.

It is my purpose to seek a deeper understanding of the processes and “objects” of remembering through the application of the hermeneutic imagination and some journeying through my own “spacious palaces” and perhaps around some of my memorial lacunae. The phenomena of memory will be portrayed from speculative philosophical, hermeneutical, and narrative positions. The dynamic of the past conceptualized tends to emplace the assumed conceptualizer within it. Instead of merely reciting my memories, however, I shall attempt also to remember remembering: to seek out images of memory which may be called preconceptual. In this way I intend to examine memory by remembering its effects on me and, perhaps, my affects on it. Memory, like the sense of a moving present which it has been thought to evoke (Bergson, 1912; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/78), may be the medium through which we experience the world since it is finally *of* the world. This position has been suggested and defended by Bergson (1912, 1911/83), Whitehead (1978), Heidegger (1962, 1977, 1987), and Jung (1963, 1971), among others. Of course, we, ourselves, are also *of* the world, but it is one of the themes of this document that therein precisely lies our amnesia, our “oblivion.” Memory, itself, may have been subjugated in the subjectivism of a culturally-imposed individuality.

With this possibility opened, memory can only be approached, it seems to me, phenomenologically: circuitously and experientially, but without advancing the expectation of discovering within an authentic self which does the remembering—though psychic images of such a self may be found to abound. “If so, then the only adequate approach to images—which provide the primary content of ‘psychic experience’—will be phenomenology, which is designed precisely to describe ‘immediate experience’ in detail” (Casey, 1987a, p. 102).

What does it *mean* to remember? What “idea” of memory do we already hold? Do all peoples hold a similar idea? How do I experience memory “working”? Does memory “create” the self, the future? Is there non-representational memory? To attempt a response to such questions, the poets’ voices may have more legitimacy than those of the philosophers or psychologists because they experience memory in a less personally circumscribed, more receptive way. There may even be two separate roots (Dunne, 1988) or modes (Casey, 1987b; Kolakowski, 1972/89) of remembering, which I will speak of shortly and in the conclusion. If different memories create different selves, *curricula* may need less enclosure.

**§Autobiographical Self; Autobiographical Truth.** It is persuasively held that the self is a composition of memories without which it could not possibly exist (Campbell, Jeremy, 1989; Casey, 1987b; Sacks, 1987).

Furthermore, these memories may only exist for the self in the present as stories or narratives, and action and experience may take place as a plot advancement of these narratives (Frye, 1957; Crites, 1986). The question then arises whether the self actually makes decisions about present actions. If the self is remembered for each decision, can it then take the action of choosing its own narratives of memory? Is such reconceptualization all that is needed for transformation? Or is the self merely another fictitious role in a larger, ongoing drama over which it has no control—is “every self the articulation of an intersubjectivity structured within and around the discourses available at any moment in time” (Sprinker, 1980, p. 325)?

The understanding of the self in lifewriting will have determinative effects on what kind of writing is produced and also in the manner in which memory is understood. The Freudian (1900/65) understanding of the self as an ego complex which develops as mediator between the libidinous desires of the id and the social controls of the superego has provided the superstructure for much later theorizing on memory and self. The ego complex is usually understood to have been subsumed by the social conscience—the superego—through which it attempts to redirect the needs of the id in a socially accepted manner. Because of the repression and suppression of those desires which ego finds unacceptable, the unconscious develops as the container of “irrepressible” memories and dreams. Worth noting here is that both dreams and memories—especially neurotic

memories—are often disguised in symbolic form so that for Freud historical memories cannot always be separated from fantasies.

Madeleine Grumet, writing in “Psychoanalytic Foundations” in 1976, seemed to conceive of the *currere* project in similar terms: “In our discussion of *currere* as an application of ego psychology we are looking at the contributions of both consciousness and the unconscious to the structures of the ego” (p. 113). However, in another article from the same period, “Existential and Phenomenological Foundations” (1976b), she leans away from Freudian ego-psychology toward Husserl’s transcendental ego for her conception of self with its attendant preconceptual memories.

Grumet’s collaborator at the time, William F. Pinar, seemed to employ a more Jungian conception of the self, though it was never specifically identified as such. *Currere* was conceived by Pinar (1974) as the verbal experience of the running-of-the-course, as opposed to the nominative, pre-designed *curriculum*, or course-to-be-run. As the primary and still most fully developed method of autobiography in curriculum, *currere* employs psychoanalytic terms alongside those of existentialism and phenomenology and some post-structuralist tropes.

Pinar, coming from the literary arts, approached the ego in a Freudian sense, but as artist and existentialist, understood this ego to be basically a delusion constructed by the repressive forces of social power structures: “The method of *currere* is one way to work to liberate oneself from the web of

political, cultural, and economic influences that are perhaps buried from conscious view but nonetheless comprise the living web that is a person's biographic situation" (1981, p. 437). Liberate to what? Liberation, Pinar indicates, is an ongoing process, both personally and socially, but he does seem to obliquely point as well toward a transcendental ego which sounds very much like the Self which is the culmination of Jung's centering notion of individuation away from the uncentered ego:

Just as one cannot peer directly into the sun but can more easily examine the earth it lights, so one cannot easily peer directly into the self. . . . One's effort is always to return to "the things themselves," to experience that which is "preconceptual." The aspiration is to unearth material hitherto submerged in unconsciousness. (1981, p. 442)

The question of remembering "the things in themselves" is of paramount importance in any investigation of memory. Can we recall pure experience, perceptions, or images without peering through a linguistic subjectivity? The question is moot, but such conceptions as transcendence or the Jungian Self cannot help but be tinged with such academically outdated terms as spirit or soul, terms that seemed acceptable to Pinar in 1976 when he compared *currere* to Zen Buddhist meditation.

Interestingly, the *satori* or awakening in Zen is considered to be linguistically impossible to describe—often dismissed in a self-effacing manner as "nothing special"—but is explained by Suzuki (1954/64) as a memory without an object: "The awakening is really the rediscovery or the excavation of a long lost treasure" (p. 179); that is to say, koan-istically, the



remembering of the face one had before conception. Preconceptual memory, image, soul, and Zen's void will be invoked further throughout.

The question arises whether such an inner liberation leads to a private *satori* or individuation—a sort of self-actualization without an effect on the world—or whether the remembering beyond ego takes one directly into the language and symbol of the world. This is the position of post-structuralists—who most often deny they have a “position” or are even post-structuralists. Politically inspired critical theorists, neo-Marxists, and the feminists of curriculum also see the self as only an illusion, a “subjectification” of the power elite, and the search for it only “betrays a hunger for something outside, something beyond judgment according to which we might be absolutely certain—according to which any one of us might be the one presumed to know. This is, of course, the logic of domination” (Pagano, 1991, p. 201).

Individual memory in this view has no purpose whatsoever. Diagnault and Gauthier (1981) see only the “paradigm of infinite regression” in seeking to remember the Self, transcendental ego, or the soul. This is precisely the point where the phenomenology of memory shades into the hermeneutics of memory which seeks no final essences but only the revelation of the intersubjectivity of all experience, where the sense of self is an afterthought of communal interaction. When we look for original memories or “when we look for pure perceptions we run the risk of an infinite regress” (Willis, 1991,

p. 176). Every memory is a re-membering. This sense of memory is obviously and inextricably linked to the world since it must be interpreted in symbols culturally understood, the chief symbol-system being language. I understand the pivotal role of language and this intermingling of part and whole to be two of the themes in the process of the hermeneutic circle, the third being the inherent creativity of interpretation (Smith, 1991). With this in mind, my research into memory must include the memory of the world—the memory within language and semiotics—as well as the memory within the presumably private self, or image of that self.

Dismissing the self as a fiction should not really have such an impact on what sort of experience remembering is. Dismissing anything as a fiction is just another way of falling into an infinite regress. It is like declaring that metaphors are not clear writing—as if there were any writing that was not metaphor (Olney, 1972). Language, itself, may be dismissed as fiction—even though it seems to some like Lacan (1977), Derrida (1978), and Kristeva (1989) to be the only “reality” we have. The self may be just a fiction within a linguistic fiction within another fiction of “the world,” but we’re going to have to live with it either way, as Philippe Lejeune (1989) expostulates: “Telling the truth about the self, constituting the self as complete subject—it is a fantasy. In spite of the fact that autobiography is impossible, this in no way prevents it from existing” (p. 132). Olney (1980) suggests that for a self to deny its own existence is either “bravura” or “anxiety” when he states that

what they are still troubling about is the self and consciousness or knowledge of it, even though in a kind of bravura way some of them may be denying rather than affirming its reality or its possibility. And this is the crux of the matter, the heart of the explanation for the special appeal of autobiography to students of literature in recent times: it is a fascination with the self and its profound, its endless mysteries and, accompanying that fascination, an anxiety about the self, an anxiety about the dimness and vulnerability of that entity that no one has ever seen or touched or tasted. (p. 23)

This sensorily unavailable "entity" throws open the question of the possibility of there being a phenomenology of the self. Willis (1991) notes that Pinar and Grumet have largely departed from the fields of phenomenology, Grumet into using autobiography to develop feminist theory and as the foundation for teacher education, and Pinar for more abstract philosophical theorizing, neither seeking any longer to "peer into the sun" of an essential self:

The intuitive scanning of one's own primary experience, which Pinar and Grumet suggest, is borrowed directly from the philosophical phenomenological tradition, although in elaborating it in their own ways appropriate to curriculum studies they have not pursued the traditional philosophic search for universal essences within experience. (p. 180)

Individual memory, then, can hardly be trustworthy as to its facticity. In this interpretation there is no unique soul which remembers.

Hermeneutically, to remember is to interpret and to interpret is to involve us in the semiotic world which created a space for our sense of self in the first place. We must always remember *through* the lens of who we think we are, and there may be all sorts of blind spots and wish fulfillments involved in

such remembering. I have experienced it with friends or acquaintances when we have reminisced over occasions in which we had shared. Unless our stories had been shared together over the years to produce mutual memories, I have found the extent to which our memories have varied nothing short of astonishing. Both in detail and overall effect it has seemed we could not possibly have been at the same place at the same time. And my memory was so clear!

Truth in autobiography with regard to times, dates, and the unfolding of events has been questioned in autobiographical theory for a long while. In the quest for truth, even autobiographers have had biographies written of them, Henry Miller being one example (Jay, 1978; Dearborn, 1991).

Mary McCarthy, in *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood* (1957), first told her narratives with all her "natural" judgmentalism and superiority, then checked the facts in italicized sections at the end of each chapter from records and relatives and wondered about the discrepancies and generalizations her own character had produced. Further backing the "law" of infinite regression, however, was that, opposed to her own opinions and memories in many cases, were simply other opinions and memories. She claims the writing and research were important experiences in themselves, however.

Going even further in the quest for truth is Ronald Fraser in his fascinating multi-layered recollection *In Search of a Past: The Manor House*,

*Amnersfield 1933-1945* (1984). Fraser, himself a historical researcher, was this time his own historian. Recalling his basic impressions, he also gathers the memories of the servants who worked at the Manor House and their often opposing viewpoints on the events surrounding his childhood. As a third approach, he relinquishes the role of questioner to be questioned himself in psychoanalysis. The revelations come fast and furious but in the end nothing is resolved, as indicated by his analyst's response to his (Fraser's) pleas for a summative opinion. The analyst replies: " ... " The hint, it seems, is that it is in the writing, in the quest itself, that a sense of meaning—even meaning as an endless project—is discovered.

In *Childhood* (1983), Nathalie Sarraute tries a different approach. Writing as an octogenarian, she allows two separate voices (at least) to recreate her past, one of which seems to be more frivolous and youthful and the other more stern and less forgiving. She attempts to be true to the facts of the past, yet succeeds in an evocation of personal experience which refuses to be hooked into a single self.

Though history, itself, has been seen as a fictitious concatenation by those who interpret its impossibly disparate events (Veyne, 1988; Young, 1990), the above examples are unashamedly literary and not at all like the memoirs of the rich and famous. There is no pretence of historical fact, despite the unusual efforts to discover it. The truest past, the past as creative of self, it seems, is discovered in its portrayal and the experience of such

portrayal. The addition of other voices may take a summative unity of experience beyond reach, but the additional dimensions express a truth to which a mere chronology can never attain. The paradox of symbology may not reveal a self but it opens out in the twilight realm of that from which selves are created, according to these artists. The literal succumbs to the literary in autobiography, which does not imply purposeful deception, as Pinar has noted, but an expansion of the *Lebenswelt* and the memorying which subtends it: “we aim, in autobiography, at truthfulness, not truth, at expanding and complicating the lived space in which we dwell, through which we experience the world—as that space expands, so does the world to which we have access” (quoted in Edgerton, 1992, p. 192).

This “truthfulness” seems to be a reference to honesty when delving into one’s personal store of memories, misguided as they may be, but it also implies the bold truthfulness necessary to doubt their eternal veracity. Such deconstructing and reconstructing is what Pinar (1992b) implies in his notion of “an architecture of self,” what Edgerton (1992) interprets as “a construction that takes seriously the boundaries one has erected as well as dissolved” (p. 188), or as Pinar (1992b) states simply: “What is planned and constructed can be deconstructed” (p. 395). Memory, then, must be considered fallible, subject to one’s present blueprints. But from where have the blueprints emerged? Surely, they can only have changed from memory’s creation

through spontaneous inspiration—presumably in solitude—or through dialogic insight, a merging of one's house blueprint into a community plan.

Spontaneous inspiration has no part in the doubting of both personal memory and the social memory which forms it, according to the sociological wing of the group of curricular theorists once called reconceptualists (Pinar, 1975, 1988b). This "wing" largely derives from the neo-Marxism of the Frankfurt School and have more recently been characterized as critical theorists. Writers like Giroux and McLaren (1989) and Apple (1979) understand the past to be purposeful deceptions of capitalistic power and they work prolifically to reveal the "hidden" curriculum which supports the ideological elite. They succeed in revealing the industrial support system that schools are urged to become and the artifice of both public and private memory, but there still seems to be the suggestion that they are somehow tuned in to a higher justice and deeper truth:

The interest of the critical tradition is not just persuasion but a predetermination to shape the social order in fixed directions; it requires material evidence of ideas translated into practice. The curricular agenda of the critical has the character of a blueprint operating in the name of justice. Pedagogy is concerned with mobilizing the social conscience of students into acts of naming and eradicating the evils of the times. (Smith, 1991, p. 196)

Apparently there is no point in personal remembering, as such activity merely supports the ideological illusion of individuality. Remembering must be done in like-minded groups basically to recall the social injustices to which we have been heir. Pinar (1981) feels they have lost contact with their

own inspirations and what they “are telling us when they insist upon the primacy of economic and political determinants of human life is that they themselves are so conditioned. . . . Structurally they are no different from their counterparts on the Right. Both confess their vulnerability to the social by their preoccupation with it” (p. 435). He could have added that hermeneutically or deconstructively speaking their interpretations can only be narratives open to the infinite regress of further interpretation. This is still a contentious point in the field, but it does seem that most thinkers who see memory as purely an ideological construct usually can only offer a truer—even if intricately subtle—ideological construct to replace it.

Madeleine Grumet (1991) now sees ideology embedded in our memories and our interpretations of them. Our imagined truths are more often merely the discourse of our place absorbed by the site of our bodies. To diminish the concretization of such ideological identities and to open it to new perspectives, she asks for more self-criticism: “After years of working with autobiography I have learned to ask for multiple accounts in order to diminish coherence and the ideologies that accompany stories that attempt to bind together the varied moments of our lives into a logic of development, purpose, or necessity” (p. 108). This implies that such logic obscures a truth more than creates one. She does not have another ideology, however, with which to transform past memories. She instead seems to move her students to understand that they are themselves narrative constructs:



Narrative is a form for inquiry that can contain both the world and relations within which it becomes the focus for our attention, a locus of concern, a system of meanings, in short, our world. The narrative encodes time and space. Like our bodies, it literally takes place. Its story line takes up time, as do we, from beginning to end" (p. 107).

Though narrative products, self and truth seem, in her regard, to be always being storied, in process, and never grasped.

The only autobiographical theorist in curriculum today who may believe in more truthful memories than those we first conjure up seems to be Richard Butt and his colleague Danielle Raymond. Early on, Butt (1985) employed such Freudian ideas as projection and defence-mechanisms to explain the misconceptions in our narratives of memory. Such Freudian terms imply a self which uses delusion to maintain its identity schema. This was later tempered with more existentialist and phenomenological terms as revealed in the title of his 1990 essay, "Autobiographic Praxis and Self Education: From Alienation to Authenticity." By the authentic memory or the authentic self, Butt may be only implying the "truthfulness" as suggested by Pinar as an approach and not the confessional outpouring of St. Augustine or Rousseau or Freud's patients, but this is uncertain.

The use of the term "authenticity" does suggest that there are truer narratives than others, however, and Graham (1991) states this means Butt and Raymond have not accepted language as being merely a system of differences without actual referential signifieds:

It would appear that Butt and Raymond are committed from the outset to a view of language as a transparent medium and consequently

consider that the value of a narrative account lies primarily in the extent to which it can be checked out for its correspondences to some previous event. In other words, Butt and Raymond seem to want an autobiographical narrative to resemble a window that provides access to some preexisting reality uncontaminated by the writing process and the intentions of the writer. (p. 114)

According to Graham, this is a motivating factor behind the development of "collaborative autobiography" for Butt and Raymond (1987, 1989) and Butt, Raymond, and Yamagishi (1988). Graham notes the emphasis on trust in the collaboration but also that "on the other hand, the researchers' desire to sit in on the teachers' classrooms in order to check out whether the teachers were telling the truth about themselves and their practices provides a broad hint that they may be ambivalent about the status of their own narratives of the teachers' classrooms *as fictional constructions themselves*" (p. 115).

In my view, Graham overstates his case. The teachers with whom Butt and Raymond, and now Butt and Townsend (1990), work all wish to see themselves more honestly and take responsibility for their own behavioral blind spots. They have entered into collaborative autobiography less as a search for final truth, than in an effort to overcome the defensive programming of their own ego-schemata. If identity is intersubjective, as is demanded by those who wonder at their own words, then collaborative autobiography may well prove to be a way to ease the grip of narcissism (Lasch, 1984) and to objectify the self, discovering the social interactions which are always in the process of creating us.

Butt does seem to accept an inescapable “isness” in personhood, as well as a “condemned to be free” attitude, as anyone who has been influenced by Sartrean existentialism would be expected to accept, and Butt (1990) tells us he has. He refers (1991), however, to the unique research tool of his and Raymond’s as worthwhile not because of its true revelations of self but because it is “energizing and empowering for teachers”:

Raymond and I evolved collaborative autobiography as a means for understanding teachers’ knowledge and development. The process provides a powerful means through which the teacher can express who she is and who she wishes to become. In our experience, it is very energizing and empowering for teachers. It enables significant renewal and professional development. This approach highlights *storytelling* as a dynamic and culturally appropriate form of pedagogy. (p. 273)

Finally, it seems to me, the factualness of memory is not what is important to Butt or his collaborators. Fundamentally, he is most concerned with the meaning and experience of actual teachers engaged in teaching and, most often, on their terms: “In interpreting and reconstructing our past, present, and futures, we move beyond what we *thought* before through action. In exploring these notions through acting them out we are able to rehearse the possibility of transformation” (Butt, 1991, p. 276).

It is interesting to note that as Pinar in recent years has largely forsaken the interactions of autobiographical work in graduate classes—certainly not attempting to take *currere* personally into the public schools—and has withdrawn into the Castelian abstractions of ever more esoteric autobiographic theory (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Pinar & Reynolds, 1992),

Butt has moved directly into the schools to work with teachers in the field (Butt, Raymond, Yamagishi, 1988; Butt, Townsend, Raymond, 1991).

There are two varying approaches to memory here, both of them necessary to our existence as humans but perhaps opposed even in origin (Neumann, 1954; Kolakowski, 1972/89). One sees memory as *techne*: a practical assistant to action; the other sees memory as *memor*: mindfulness, a recoil of the soul upon itself whose only product seems to be actions, representations, and artifacts which serve the needs of the animal body not at all. Heidegger saw the difference this way: "Only now, within the widely and deeply grasped essence of memory, the contrast emerges between that firm hold on things, which the Romans called *memoria tenere*, and evanescence" (In Krell, 1990, p. 297).

Seeking a "firm hold," even collaboratively with the full agreement of the collaborators, is not the architecture of self Pinar (1992b) envisions: "One danger of autobiography is further reification of these processes, and the construction of an unchanging edifice, a skyscraper proudly proclaiming its owner and occupants" (p. 406). Pinar's blueprints of self are not mazes within which we can at last find our way because—collaboratively—the neighbours phone to tell us where we are; such deconstructing blueprints more resemble the runes of an *anarchitecture* whose self-constructions evanesce even as they are glimpsed. I will discuss this further as I discuss the self as aesthetic creation.

Connelly and Clandinin (1991), narrative researchers in other teachers' stories, have given up the expectation of finding a true self behind the stories they encounter. Somewhat uncomfortably, it seems, they admit:

There are more "I's" than person and researcher within each research participant. . . . In narrative inquiry we see that the practices drawn out in the research situation are lodged in our personal knowledge of the world. One of our tasks in writing narrative accounts is to convey a sense of the complexity of all the "I's" all of the ways each of us have of knowing. (p. 140)

They accept no authentic, singular self but a plurality of selves, each, presumably with its own memorial interpretations. How, then, it may be wondered, do they manage to decide which accounts are "more authentic" and which "less authentic"? They have developed their own system for approximating the truth, it seems:

In our studies we use the notions of "adequacy" and "plausibility." A "plausible" account is one that tends to "ring true." It is an account of which one might say "I can see that happening." Thus, while fantasy may be an invitational element in fictional narrative, plausibility exerts firmer tugs in empirical narratives. (p. 136)

In their notion of empirical narratives, they may find an ally in Grumet (1991), who feels autobiography should be subject to both a sympathetic hearing and an expert review. This does not explain how some of the finest works of "pure" fiction so seduce us with their "adequacy" and "plausibility." If the self is a figment of social discourse, it must be wondered where spaces are opened for pure fictions in the first place, or if a space within a mythic sort of fiction opens out into the facticity of individual memory. Whence comes imagination or intuition into this culturally-determined intersubjectivity?

Curricular autobiography has been somewhat appropriated as a mode of liberation for feminists (e.g., Benstock, 1988; Grumet, 1988; Pagano, 1990; Witherell & Noddings, 1991), or self-realization for marginal groups in general. For such groups, the question of the ultimate reality of the self may seem unimportant. According to Edgerton (1992), the question is which self to become—that offered by the larger society or the self seeking existence within its own cultural memories:

Often, in “writing the self into existence” such authors are also actively engaged in writing an entire people along with them. This alters the context for theorizing about autobiography from the apparent context for much written autobiographical theory. This context, with its larger pedagogical and emancipatory project, can render arguments about “fictions of the self” pedantic, but, at the same time it renders the isolated, unified, “self-identical” self obsolete—a distortion. (p. 186)

Dewey and G. H. Mead, according to Graham (1991), understood long ago that the self is social, and it is for this reason feminists have taken issue with the individualism—either as self-referential or self-creative—of much autobiographical writing and theory. Identity, it is claimed, is exclusively relational, so claims to individualism only reflect the mutual projections of a privileged—read employed white heterosexual male—minority. Friedman (1988) claims both Georges Gusdorf and James Olney in Olney's 1980 collection of autobiographical essays ignore “the differences in socialization in the construction of male and female gender identity” (pp. 34-35) and perpetrate the myth of individuality presumably to the detriment of those, like

women, who are either not so privileged or so inclined toward individuality. We recall ourselves differently through different socializations.

The argument may be “academic.” Individuality conceived as an impregnable castle, or a towering skyscraper, imagines itself as self-created and established behind its thick walls of self-defenses. Of course, such rugged individualism has no doubt about the correctness of its memories and values and so, like Dirty Harry, can discern the good “us” from the evil “them” and proceed, apparently, to blow the evil others away without remorse.

Socially constructed subjectivity, on the other hand, sometimes leans so far into the communal register that positions become rules and variance ceases to be tolerated. Mythically, this is the change from inspired prophets to priestly “orders.” Autobiography in support of feminist positions which remembers socialized injustice has been called empowering by many (e.g., Miller, 1987; Roman, Christian-Smith, Ellsworth, 1988) but there is a danger here of a presumption of knowing what true justice, or true selves are: an essentialism which ignores, again, the hermeneutic paradigm of infinite regression, as well as forgetting that even “essential” selves must have developed as places in some community.

William Pinar (1992b), politically feminist, reminds us that communal relations may be modified from “commodity” relations, but also that there is a time when even the most socially-oriented autobiographers must withdraw into a situation, if not of individualism, then certainly of isolation:

Autobiography as alternately sublimated and desublimated modalities of self-self, self-other, and self-object relations, is itself an exclusion, an absence, in schools and in the public sphere generally. To engage oneself and others autobiographically reconnects the minimalized, psychological self of the public, political sphere as it de-commodifies interpersonal relations. Such engagement risks debasement if performed exclusively or primarily through speech, that presence of immediacy which recapitulates the momentariness of mass culture. Only through the "secondariness" of writing, solitarily, in a Kierkegaardian "soliloquy with oneself," can the architect construct (and deconstruct) his presence to himself and to others in the world. (p. 408)

Despite the different cultural and political projects of feminists in general, it is possible that most women, for whatever reason, remember in different ways than most men. Benstock (1988) has indicated in her introductory chapter that

women's writings often proceed from anxiety rather than desire and are written under the sign of melancholia rather than mourning. These differences—which mark in a general sense a difference between male and female writing—give rise to a specially marked form of writing, one that situates the loss that is the spur to creation not in the past (as Freud and Lacan theorized) but rather in the future, reading its possibilities as the aging process itself. (p. 8)

Be that as it may, it seems that most can agree that self is a social construct. This opens up problems when it is considered upon what site such a self is constructed. To ignore the body, both in its unique placement and its genetically specific drives and attributes, is to fall into behaviorism in which there is no free-will allowed the person at all (except for the free-will of the experts who decide what behaviors are most appropriate). Felicity Nussbaum (1988) indicates that socially created subjectivity, of the kind



described by Lacan or Foucault, does not imply that such a subject is unable to participate in its own ongoing, shifting process, but can “adopt a position” within the language-world:

This reformulated “self,” then, is a product of specific discourse and social process. Individuals construct themselves as subjects through language, but individual subjects—rather than being the source of their own self-generated and self-expressive meaning—adopt positions available within language at a given moment. This disruption of the traditional self redefines the individual as a position, a locus where discourses intersect, and subjectivity as a social construct that is constantly being reorganized. The intersections between social relations and individual subject perpetually shift and change to produce an inconsistent and contradictory subject. (pp. 149, 150)

In my quest for memory, is there any use to looking toward the individual, or some sort of inner essence, at all—even the body—, or should I focus only on the larger memories of the language-world which has told us who we are? Nussbaum indicates we *are* an intersection of discourses. Was there any “being” in us before we were introduced to the world of others: of language, but also the semiotics of faces, of touches, and of aural tones.

Martha Heyneman, in an article called “The Mother Tongue” (1992), is ambivalent on this point. By looking at the stories of those who were deprived of normal human contact of the sort described above in their earliest years, she notes how fearful or “bestial” these beings were. (“Bestial” may be an unfortunate choice of words, however, because many of the “lower” animals are alone from the moment of hatching and seem to survive on genetically-programmed knowledge.)

She mentions the famous experiment of Frederick II (1194-1250) of Germany who had some children reared without sound or touch or facial interplay to see if they would speak Greek or Hebrew or whatever. They all died. Casper Hauser who spent his first years in a dungeon had great difficulty in distinguishing things and learning depth perception as opposed to a chaos of colours on a flat service. The Wild Boy of Aveyron never learned anything to speak of. For humans—who can be sure of dolphins or chimps?—early contact with the “mother tongue” seems to be necessary for identity and for life, itself. As the poet Rilke (1939) wrote, elegaically:

*Mother, ... you arched over those new eyes  
the friendly world, averting the one that was strange.  
Where, oh where, are the years when you simply displaced  
for him, with your slender figure, the surging abyss?*

Heyneman feels “There is a sense that one is calling another, and a recognition that one has been called by others, out of darkness and uncontrollable chaos” (p. 10). Her paramount example is Helen Keller who, she notes, had nineteen months as an infant to experience those aspects of the mother tongue to awaken her soul before being plunged into her particular darkness and silence for the next six years. Helen became articulate enough to attempt to explain the oblivion of her previous life:

Before my teacher came to me, I did not know that I am. I lived in a world that was a no-world. I cannot hope to describe adequately that unconscious, yet conscious time of nothingness. I did not know that I knew aught, or that I lived or acted or desired. I had neither will nor intellect. I was carried along to objects and acts by a certain blind natural impetus. I had a mind which caused me to feel anger, satisfaction, desire. These two facts led those about me to suppose

that I willed and thought. I can remember all this, not because I knew it was so, but because I have tactile memory. It enables me to remember that I never contracted my forehead in the act of thinking. . . . I also recall tactually the fact that never in a start of the body or a heartbeat did I feel that I loved or cared for anything. My inner life, then, was a blank without a past, present, or future. (Keller, 1910. *The World I Live in*. p. 113. In Heyneman, 1992, p. 11)

Personal memory, then, in these theories, cannot exceed itself; it cannot go back to personal memories before the life-force was summoned into the world by the mother tongue because there was no person there. In the life-world, personal memories seem to be created in the shifting loci “where discourses intersect” (Nussbaum), rather than gathering around a central core of self. If one is to pursue memory, then, the quest must be into the formative discourses which have intersected at the position of subjectivity and continue to do so. Because of our intersubjectivity, our sense of self is constantly changing, though primary memory and body memory provide us with a sense of continuity (Casey, 1987b, next section). It is no wonder memories are seldom, if ever, exact when our very identities are so intermingled with those of others. In this situation, it must be admitted that imagination is always active in our remembering.

But this too fails to escape the paradigm of infinite regression. If our imagination is given a vague sort of primacy and we can now announce our autobiographies to be artistic fictions, it brings us no closer to the mystery of how memory extends into the language-world. History, as noted, is most often merely the “official version” of the past, a narrow sequencing of events

according to present interpretation. Pinar (1992b) indicates that our narratives of memory always reach back into the larger stories of our culture and must do so. Not just the official history of a people but what we today would call their literature and other arts provide the mythic context from which our imagining takes the form for remembered life-stories:

Cultural myths are, of course, intertwined with personal myths. In one sense an architect of self works with the material of myths, especially its literary subgenre, stories. We tell stories about our families, our school history, etc., and in so doing interpret experience, creating fictions. Our personal stories occur in cultural stories, sometimes coinciding with the latter, sometimes told in opposition or denial of them. The point is that in a Nietzschean sense the self is fictive; it is an aesthetic creation, and the means by which the self is planned and "built" are story-telling and myth-making. (p. 394)

But if the self is an "aesthetic creation," a "mythmaking" project, it still leaves the question moot as to the sources of such imaginative myths. Do we remember and somehow reassemble the potential tales or inspired visions within the language-world? Infinite regression again: We understand inspiration to come from the "unconscious," but is such an unconscious within us as soul or biological potential, or "around" us in the repressed unsaid of the linguistic? Why are some driven to "reassemble" and others to remain assembled?

This approaches the peculiarly Western dichotomy referred to as that of the subject/object. In the mediæval West, the study of alchemy first seemed to locate the unconscious within, as in the depths of soul:

Mercurius ... is an absolutely primitive concept, a projection symbolizing the unconscious itself where nothing can be

differentiated. He is in effect a symbol of the subjective factor, the unconscious as a dynamic energetic substance correlated with other aspects of energy composing the cosmos. Its essence is symbol-production. . . . Mercurius is the inchoate source of the conscious complex, the ego, which is the son of darkness and through which the "world" comes into existence. (Grinnell, 1973, p. 17)

In other cultures, especially those where a "within" simply has no place, the source of all mystery was the world itself. For the Australian Aborigine, the world was derived from the Dreamtime, and his existence always a part of the Dreaming: "An Aborigine can never escape the sacred history of his people. He is constantly in contact with a metaphysical perspective which conditions his way of thinking and acting" (Cowan, 1992, p. 64).

Each case indicates a supra-personal remembering or a potential for such, either in the encounter with the unconscious or with the gods who are always present. Imagining gives shape to the vague intuitions of memory so that self and world again intermingle like a dream that can't be grasped. Such intuitions in our era have led to the idea that we have paid a price for projecting the gods (or God) far beyond Earth and introjecting our unique egos, our subjectivities, within. A. Vernon Woodworth (1989) has bluntly stated in his article, "Architecture and the Anima Mundi: Transformations in Sacred Space," that "the displacement of deities to a heavenly region resulted in a lessening in the experience of sacred immanence, that is, of the Anima Mundi" (p. 135). It may be said that what we now somewhat

disparagingly call imagination was taken from the world and introjected with our subjectivities, where, for those receptive, it still continues to work.

This imagination, I hope to show throughout this paper, is more a particular kind of reception to images conserved in memory than the reverse. Yeats in "The Second Coming" (1921) expressed his tendency to be subject to such spells or visions:

Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
Troubles my sight. (lines 11-13)

The editors then proceed to quote Yeats to expand on his notion of "*Spiritus Mundi*":

Or *Anima Mundi*, the Great Memory. "Before the mind's eye, whether in sleep or waking, came images that one was to discover presently in some book one had never read, and after looking in vain for explanation to the current theory of forgotten personal memory, I came to believe in a great memory passing on from generation to generation. . . . Our daily thought was certainly but the line of foam at the shallow edge of a vast luminous sea" (*Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, "Anima Mundi," § ii. In Allison, et al., 1983, p. 883).

Such a "Great Memory," composed as it is of images, speaks of a preconceptual memory, the existence of which remains a controversial question in these language-immersed times, and one which can never be finally resolved (from our present emplacement). We certainly cannot think our way to a preconceptual state, and direct experience of such a state can have no memoried content, depending as it does on re-presentation. Aoki (1991), however, still believes in the "mindfulness" of direct experience, and

Zen masters did not seem to mind that their awareness was not explainable. It was, after all, “nothing special” (Suzuki, 1954/64).

Autobiographical truth and the self of autobiography are going to have to wait for someone else to locate their referents. I have unearthed indications that, though memory cannot be “counted on” for self-certainty or for truth, its very evanescence may lead it to images of a preconceptual state, a “dreamtime” which may be a sort of fount of imagination, though this can never be known, that is, known conceptually. It may certainly be imagined.

But this is not to eschew the ego or the power of its critical concepts. Heyneman’s (1992) description of the “spiritual path” may apply as well to those who attempt to remember beyond words and it seems a good place to end this extended section:

It seems ironic that later in life, if we pursue a spiritual path, we struggle with the ego, to still the stream of incessant chatter that began at our birth, and to realize our own nothingness, in order to make room in ourselves for something greater than the ego. But it takes a strong ego with a critical mind to distinguish what is genuinely greater from what is ersatz, and to surrender voluntarily to ... what one has been looking for all one’s life. If we had not been called out of nonbeing by our mother and father, or those who undertook to fill their places, there would be no pilgrim to set out on the search. (pp. 11, 12).

**§Phenomena of Remembering and Beyond.** Edward Casey’s

*Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (1987b), ten years in the writing and a follow-up to his *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (1976), and David Farrell Krell’s *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing : On the Verge*

(1990), which he claims has been in process since his research proposal for his dissertation in 1969, have been highly suggestive in my often pathless wanderings in the labyrinth of memory. Both are phenomenological studies, though Casey transcends the phenomenological method when he takes “memory beyond mind,” and Krell deconstructs his own writing in a fascinating manner as he allows into his text the whisperings of the literature that spoke to him in his investigations.

Casey’s book is a revelation, ultimately affirming for the Great Memory, or *anima mundi*, thus somewhat humbling for our proud humanistic—man the measure of all things—enterprise. Krell’s book is an astonishing *tour de force* which he considers “a long and interesting death” (p. xi). He begins by quoting himself when he was setting out that “Memory has a way of transforming any content into a wondrous appearance, bathing even the most traumatic event in a soothing light ...” but concludes his preface with the resignation: “I wanted that soothing light for my writing, but it turned out to be a darkness. A darkness that irony and science could only disperse, never penetrate” (p. xii).

Krell, primarily known as a Heidegger scholar, has understood the *erasure* that Derridean post-structuralism requires. The very structure of language, its linear sentencing and its skyscraper constructions built by argument from the ground up, is the source of what we call sense and from which we derive meaning. It is the victory of *logos* over ...something, but this



something has not been inscribed in language and cannot be inscribed into it without becoming another linear plank in the unending skyscraper. Krell has presented a magnetic text which succeeds more than anything outside of literature in evoking what a post-structure might be, what forgotten *élan vital* might lie in what the structure has dismissed as madness: “But this crisis in which reason is madder than madness—for reason is non-meaning and oblivion—and in which madness is more rational than reason, for it is closer to the wellspring of sense, however silent or murmuring—this crisis has always begun and is interminable” (Derrida, 1978, p. 62).

In this brief section, however, I shall delineate Casey’s work in order to make some foundational sense for the chapters to follow. Casey’s (1987b) position is that “plural modes of access to the remembered past are far more plentiful than philosophers and psychologists have managed to ascertain” (p. xi), though he does make exception for the cognitive-behavioral work of Marcia K. Johnson (1985). Because of these multifarious modes of remembering and its always “on the verge” aspect, Casey says that, unlike imagining, in “remembering, there is an unresolvable ‘restance’<sup>1</sup>—resistance as well as remainder—which calls for a different approach” (p. xi).

Casey claims we are drawn away from the earthy burden of remembering toward Milan Kundera’s “unbearable lightness of being” (1985)

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<sup>1</sup>Derrida (1981)

and Nietzsche's "active forgetfulness" (1983). It is for this reason we turn to the fascination of the computer:

The half-life induced by forgetting, its oblivious half-life, tempts us to attribute the full reality of remembering to machines. As if by a rigid law of compensation, the logic seems to be: the less responsibility I have for my own remembering, the more I can forget—ultimately, the more I can forget my own forgetting. And the more I can forget, the more responsibility I can ascribe to other entities: most conveniently to computers, or to my own brain or mind regarded as computerlike. (p.3)

Casey makes several dichotomies, between which some structure can be discerned. Being who we are, some structure is necessary for us to feel a sense of place, and without a sense of place, according to Casey, there can be no remembering. Casey traces philosophies on memory basically from the works of Plato and those of Aristotle somewhat as follows: Those who have followed the former he calls the "activist" tradition, and those of the latter, the "passivist" tradition. Plato, of course, saw knowledge as *anamnesis*, a recovery of the forgotten truths from the realm of pure form or pure ideas: active. Aristotle, on the contrary, understood memory as a waxen tablet on which were inscribed the detritus of perceptual and intellectual events: passive—there are correct memories and incorrect memories.

The passivist paradigm has prevailed as science has proved its effectiveness and factual information has been documented in writing to make it available to others. Facts are facts, are they not?

Only in the undercurrents of the occult and alchemy did the activist paradigm continue, until Nietzsche dramatically arrived on the scene to

announce the death of God and the end of history. Nietzsche pointed out that, like Luria's "S." (1968) who could recall nearly all the details with which he was confronted, too much memorized data would dissolve identity and make us insane. "S." had to actively forget in order to carry on with his life, yet he did not possess a strong sense of self. Nietzsche advocated forgetting to avoid the horror—the "heaviness"—of realizing that all is an eternal return.

Heidegger deplored our recalling of the details of egoistic selfhood to cover over our forgetfulness of being. It was Heidegger who blamed Plato for taking memory from myth, from the gods, and internalizing it as though it were some sort of transcendent region for the esoteric elect. Heidegger (1977), like Casey, recommends "commemorative thought" as a way to experience the body in place, to experience time in place, and to awaken to being. It was Merleau-Ponty (1978) who recognized the body as primary place of memory. In my *Coda* and conclusion, I shall expand somewhat on commemoration and body memory.

Freud and his heirs in psychoanalysis developed an active memory theory in which either the recovery of repressed memorial contents or the discovery of the need for forgetfulness would give the ego more scope to deal with the overwhelming moods or neurotic actions it found the body undergoing. Jung, of course, implied that memory and dream not only alleviate repression but provide dangerous but passable doorways to the bottomless contents of the collective unconscious.

On the other hand, the passive tradition, according to Casey (1987b), "is still very much with us, whether it takes the form of a naive empiricism or of a sophisticated model of information processing." This is opposed to the activism "according to which memory involves the creative transformation of experience rather than its internalized reduplication in images or traces construed as copies" (p. 15).

Activism is involved in all remembering to some extent in that a search is often required to retrieve even "passive" contents. The objective experimentalists, usually calling themselves psychologists, are opposed by the activist originators of schema theory: "But it is not until recent times that full-fledged activist models of memory have been developed: e.g., in Janet's idea of the retroactive transformation of memories by means of their narration,<sup>1</sup> ... in Bartlett's theory of the evolving character of memories as these are reconstructed by various memorial schemata; and in Piaget's similar theory that memories directly reflect changing schemes of accommodation to and assimilation of experience" (Casey, 1987b, p. 15).

Activism seems to be liable to both negative and positive interpretations. Schema theory indicates that memories are processed, filed, censored, or altered to accommodate a schematic self-representation which is usually unconsciously derived (Ross, 1992), or in-gathered from social, especially parental, suggestions. A schema is mirror-image, an objectively

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<sup>1</sup>Certainly worth noting for autobiographical theorists in curriculum.

apprehended self. The more unconsciously such schemata are kept and held there, the less self-aware we are and the more prone to self-delusions—though often others around us, to their amusement or disgust, do not partake of those same delusions. Piaget (1973), however, has indicated that self-development can lead to near absolute freedom in choosing what type of schema, what type of self, we wish to have, so we may choose a self more likely to be authentic and in tune with the world.

Such ideal free-choice, like choosing a self in a wine-cellar, is tempered by psychoanalysis, especially the idea that ego and body-image are learned through identification: “Psychoanalysis proposes a model of mind that challenges the Cartesian-Lockean prototype. It challenges it not just by recognizing an unconscious dimension of fantasy and memory, but also by specifying that mind is *ineluctably intersubjective in origin and import*. Such is the implication of the idea of identification itself” (Casey, p. 243). Psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on active remembering, also tempers passivism.

Piaget’s optimism, and Casey’s own movement toward freedom in modes of interpreting the past is tempered in turn by Casey’s own insistence on memory’s “thick autonomy” (pp. 262-287), in which the very density of memory resists the attempts of consciousness to plumb its compelling depths. The mnemonist “S.” in Luria (1968) had to actively *forget* his

inundation of memories to have even a semblance of identity, which points to other difficulties with this model.

Krell (1989) wonders whether the activism of memory is in consciousness, the schematic self, or is in another “nonspace”: “What if that activist paradigm held the secret of the vaunted ‘autonomy’ and ‘freedom’ of remembering, a freedom exercised in the nonspace of the soul—a soul, to be sure, infected by the body and its hollows?” (p. 253) He doubts that the act of remembering can be separated from its narration, as Casey sometimes implies. Memory as impressions on a wax tablet (Aristotle) is the very writing from which our thinking on memory continues to derive, as Krell contends:

Memory is *engrammatology*, the gleaning of incised marks or engrams as though they were letters, γραμματα. . . . It will not do to flee the passivism of wax for a phenomenological activism. For the activist gleaning remains wholly embroiled in the passivist typography. “Freedom” is engrammatological; “truth” iconographic; and both are typographic. (p. 254)

Narrative proceeds by defining and dichotomizing. The dichotomization inherent in consciousness may be what leads us to fantasies of separation from the world or from each other, including the subject-object polarity. Consciousness must divide to grow. Aware of this, Casey’s review of his next dichotomies, primary and secondary memory (derived from William James), also imply some difficulties with Piaget’s optimism.

Secondary memory deals with those memories which in Whitehead’s (1978) words have “perished” subjectively and become “objective occasions” which can affect us only through “efficient causation.” In other words they

have no direct influence on our immediate state of awareness. They must be “recalled” before they can be heard from. Primary memory, on the contrary, sounds suspiciously like self-schema or like Whitehead’s “presentational immediacy”: It is the zone of collected habits—physical, cognitive, perceptual—from which we act and experience. It works mainly on an unconscious level but need not do so. To become conscious of primary memory is to become conscious of the “storied nature of the self” (Schank, 1990), or of our phenomenological “lived reality,” but it must be born in mind that primary “memory” also contains body and place imperatives which may become, at best, subliminally *conscious*—but which are always *aware*.

Primary memory is referred to by Kerby (1991) as “character” or “habitus”: “This character is thus constituted by a more or less unified and unifying substrate of habitualities or dispositions, of act types exhibiting a lawfulness determined by prior sedimented ego properties [ego: a pole of identity rather than a substantial entity]—what in medieval thought was termed a *habitus*” (p. 20).

For the alchemists, however, the dark side of character was the *habitus*. The unconscious motivations within this *habitus* were considered to be the primary source of all the self-deceptions, cruelties, and evil in individuals who imagined themselves as pure and good—negative motivations ultimately derived from the shadow-side of parents. Grinnell

(1973), a modern alchemist, refers to these aspects as “rabid dog” which fears the loving redemption metaphorized as flowing water:

For, as Jung says, there is [sic] evil and darkness in the parents which can only come to light in their offspring. And so collectively, childish, brutally short-sighted goals of pride and concupiscence which have hardened into a *habitus* reveal themselves as a sort of hydrophobic dog. . . . It condenses into itself solar and lunar agencies at a bestial level in which evil has hardened into a *habitus* and the diseased eros passed on by the parents acts like the foaming rage of a rabid dog. (pp. 104, 105)

Memory functioning within the *habitus* of the present is already whispering its stories of love, warning, purpose, and identity. It surrounds our thinking and feeling like a cloud of possibility and limitation. Our actions spring from the character we have become in our life-world drama. To realize our part and the rationalizations or loyalties which condition it, we must make conscious the narratives within which we are presently living, the “part” of the story we are presently acting out. Others have suggested we can make such things conscious through reflection, especially as reflected in a form of lifewriting. To write the self, however, is not to discover it. Like fractal geometry, the hermeneutic of memory promises only infinite regress.

Or does it? This *habitus*, this *Lebenswelt*, may consist of primary stories or first principles which stay with us always, but often it is a shifting pattern of narratives in which ideas and occasionally even values shift over time. Seeking the boundary of lived reality may indeed be to discover only whirling compasses and disorienting clouds. As Einstein predicted, a straight line out at some point arrives at its starting point. As Nietzsche



declared, there is only the eternal return. A quest to discover the borders of the habitus *we are* may have us travelling in circles—not an endless regression but a labyrinthine journey which transforms the traveller.

Still, there are problems with Casey's dichotomizing. Krell (1989) asks: "Why does Casey accept the division into primary and secondary remembering when, as he concedes, primary remembering does not even pertain to memory?" (p. 262). Casey, himself, casts doubt on both his active/passive and primary/secondary distinctions in his impressive final chapters on body memory, place memory, and commemoration, all considered in his section, "Pursuing Memory beyond Mind."

"Body memory alludes to memory that is intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and by and through the body" (Casey, p. 147). One mundane example he gives is that of hearing the whine of a steel drill at a building site and immediately feeling pain in a tooth which had been crowned weeks earlier. Casey asserts: "let me state baldly that *there is no memory without body memory*" (p. 172).

Marcel Proust, too, in all his concentrated efforts at memory, found that the body of his narrator—not daytime recollections—brought about significant connections with past things, places, and years:

My body, still too heavy with sleep to move, would endeavour to construe from the pattern of its tiredness the position of its various limbs, in order to deduce therefrom the direction of the wall, the location of the furniture, to piece together and give a name to the house in which it lay. Its memory, the composite memory of its ribs, its knees, its shoulder-blades, offered it a whole series of rooms in which

it had at one time or another slept, while the unseen series of rooms in which it had at one time or another slept, while the unseen walls, shifting and adapting themselves to the shape of each successive room that it remembered, whirled round it in the dark. And even before my brain, lingering in cogitation over when things had happened and what they had looked like, had reassembled the circumstances sufficiently to identify the room, it, my body, would recall from each room in succession the style of the bed, the position of the doors, the angle at which the sunlight came in at the windows, whether there was a passage outside, what I had had in mind when I went to sleep and found there when I awoke. (1981, I, p. 6)

Body memory adds the dimension of depth to remembering, though its actions are not subject in themselves to recollection. Body memory is contained in primary memory. Casey suggests that we can use Whitehead's notion of causal efficacy "as providing the most promising basis for understanding the deep ingrency of body memory in memory generally" (p. 173). Causal efficacy, a sort of past prehension, *precedes* external perception and has an aspect Whitehead specifically calls bodily efficacy. I address a more thorough discussion of Whitehead, time, and memory in chapter 3.

Body memory is seen by Casey as "crucially interstitial in status. The basic borderline it occupies is traced between *mind* and *place*: it is their middle term, their *tertium quid*" (p. 180). In discussing place memory, Casey makes his strongest case for a deeper, non-narrative memory. He cites the Pythagorean Archytas as declaring that place is "the first of all beings, since everything that exists is in a place and cannot exist without a place" (p. 184). He distinguishes place from mere site, a geometric space like any other:

It is the nature of place, in contradistinction from site, to encourage and support such distinctiveness, thereby enhancing memorability. Requisite to any full understanding of memory of place is thus a recognition of the way in which place itself aids in remembering. It does so precisely as being well suited to contain memories—to hold and preserve them. (p. 186)

Place haunts Proust's narrator as being evocative of memories. Each place has its own resonance: "Combray," "Balbec," "Paris," "Doncières," etc. Joyce had to leave the place of his birth to remember it without being overwhelmed by it. Henry Miller and D. H. Lawrence found different places to inspire very different writing. Lawrence Durrell (1969) has written that "human beings are expressions of their landscapes" (p. 157). Place makes us inhabitants of the world. It contains us and orients us, as Casey twice quotes John Russell observing:

"Where am I?" is, after all, one of the most poignant of human formulations. It speaks for an anxiety that is intense, recurrent, and all but unbearable. Not to know where we are is torment, and not to have a sense of place is a most sinister deprivation. ("How Art Makes Us Feel at Home in the World," *New York Times*, April 12, 1981. In Casey, p. 195)

It is interesting to note that upon awakening from unconsciousness no one asks, "When am I?" We need only think of places from our personal pasts to have all sorts memories evoked: sensory glimmers, emotions, persons, pets, joy, trauma, or, perhaps, nervous lacunae.

The very fact of spending our early, formative years in a house may have led us to envision our minds as having secret closets, forbidden bedrooms, hidden nooks and crannies, cluttered attics, and foreboding but

compelling cellars. Other cultures have different psychic environments: think only of the difference in the space or emplacement of memory between the Amazonian's life-drunk enclosure in the thick jungle and the arid, open sandscapes of the Arab nomads.

Casey feels time as we commonly understand it—a succession of instants or points—only disperses memory:

By its very immobility—through the stolid concreteness of things set within pathways and horizons—place acts to contain time itself. This is not to trivialize time but to make it into a dimension of space through the active influence of place. On the other hand, time *is* trivialized when it is reduced to calendrical-historical dates. (p. 214)

It may be said we pass through places, but, in a sense, their memory continues to contain us. Time, on the other hand, just passes, like the wind, and only “bending boughs” and the mirror speak of its passing. We do not need memory’s narratives,—unless place is considered a prenarrative—place will suffice to become lost in what Casey calls “ruminescences”<sup>1</sup> (p. 49, p. 112). But narrative, especially autobiographical writing about or within particular places, may well be a *via regia*, a royal road, to bringing to consciousness or interpreting the affective meaning of such places. Place memory, which includes bodily memory, might well be the natural “place” to begin “an architecture of self,” as suggested by William Pinar (1992b). An

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<sup>1</sup>“Casey coins the word *ruminescence*, which combines ‘reminiscence’ and ‘rumination,’ in order to capture the mood or emotional state that often accompanies remembering. (Perhaps ‘luminescence’ and the ‘numinous’ resound there as well.)” (Krell, 1989, p. 259)

architect of self needs a place to construct, even if that place must occasionally be deconstructed to a site for the next constructive endeavour.

“ ‘Commemoration’ means an *intensified remembering*” (Casey, p. 217). Though Casey uses it in its public sense as an occasion for paying homage to events and people one has never experienced or met, he also notes that here, in this remembering, language is essential. As Krell (1989) has noted of his chapters on body and place memory: “Everything depends on Casey’s being able to separate off the narrative from the memory” (p. 255). In the less obvious—compared to official ceremonies—commemorabilia of language, itself, Casey here gives in to narrative and points to the supra-personal remembering found intersubjectively:

Could it be that in its communal-discursive aspect commemorating forms a part of *all* remembering? If so, this would imply that *there is no remembering of any kind that is not in some sense verbal or verbally-based*: if not occurring expressly *in* language, then arising *through its agency*. Just as commemoration is a calling to remembrance through language—through ritual-cum-text, ritual *as* text—so memory is indeed a matter of “re-call.” Might it even be that recollection, seemingly dependent upon images alone, occurs as re-collection through language? Can there be such a thing as a purely nascent image that counts as a memory—or a purely bodily action that counts as a commemoration—without the intervention of words at some significant stage? (p. 233)

I will be returning to the memory within language at several stages in the pages to come, as well as to the implications for consciousness. Suffice to say at this stage that Casey points directly to commemoration as participation of the sort written about by Lévy-Bruhl (1926/85). Since our particular type of subjectively-centered consciousness expands through

division—creation of new dichotomies and definitions—Casey understands that at some point separate identity is overcome, as in Yeats' "Great Memory" or Anima Mundi: "In short, whenever we become engaged in commemorative activity—whether this occurs in a dyadic or a polyadic context—*representation cedes place to participation*" (p. 251).

**§Preview.** Commemoration may take place unconsciously and it is not to be identified with history. The "Linguistics" section of chapter 4 extends this point. Casey's last section on "The Thick Autonomy of Memory" will be discussed in my final chapter, as it seems to culminate in a sense of memory, in line with Krell's, which reveals memory as a worldly force, as, in fact, fate.

In my awaiting chapters, I pursue memory along the rhizoid network of its roots in *memor*, or mindfulness, as opposed to memory as *teknē*, a sort practical assistant to constructive action. To use another dichotomy, I rarely follow the mode of cognitive functioning defined by Bruner (1987) as the scientific methods which establish formal, empirical proof, but instead pursue his other mode, narrative, which establishes not truth but "verisimilitude"—parallel, I think, to Pinar's "truthfulness" (p. 25). In other words, I pursue, plead, and evoke memory through the labyrinthine pathways of story and theory no matter where they lead, rather than examining memory to be used specifically as a tool in autobiographical or other classrooms.

My inquiry, then, is neither a cognitive psychological one nor an analytical one. I consider it to be phenomenological in that I seek to perceive below the layers of interpretation in the direction of memory's "centre," always recognizing that any centre re-cognized is already a secondary cognition. Perception must be a perception of this memory (or a memory of the memory) and it is already subject to interpretation. In this way, this study is also hermeneutical:

There is a similar risk in treating phenomenology and hermeneutics separately. First, since we are humans, there may not be at the center of our life-worlds any pure perceptions or feelings untainted by the meanings we impose upon them. . . . Second, when we look for pure perceptions we run the risk of an infinite regress. (Willis, 1991, p. 176)

Because of this hermeneutical element, I felt it incumbent upon me to include me, the researcher, as subject of inquiry. All writing is in some sense autobiographical and narrational, but since this will be made explicit I felt it necessary to encompass this whole inquiry with strong narrational elements. I approach the phenomenon of memory within what Smith (1991) has called the hermeneutic imagination. The hermeneutic imagination, Smith says, shows how meaning is arrived at "referentially and relationally" and avoids conceptual or categorial authority:

The conversational quality of hermeneutic truth points to the requirement that any study carried on in the name of hermeneutics should provide a report of the researcher's own transformations undergone in the process of the inquiry; a showing of the dialogical journey, we might call it" ( pp. 197-198).

Narrative theory, as well as the hermeneutic imagination, demands an explicit involvement of the researcher in his/her research. In some way, the researcher *is* the research. Language may come to the subject from the world, but the subject (or the self) becomes the language-conveyer of the world into the future. The narrativist, Kerby (1991), also asks for investigation of the subject of language:

But what now of the subject who is, in some sense, the source of language? If on one hand language cannot be separated from the world as we know it, then on the other hand we surely cannot extricate ourselves from language. It is this other dimension, that of the human subject or language user, that particularly needs to be investigated today..., for why should we exempt ourselves from the very critique that we so readily apply to the world around us? (p. 3)

The narratives of my past—the narratives of the subject—seem to work within larger narratives which are usually less easily “heard.” These are myths which can be understood as cultural ideologies (Barthes, 1957/72) or as Lyotard (1984) calls them, meta-narratives. But there is a more imaginative, less-closed sense of myth within and beyond the narratives of our remembering: “Myths do not ground, they open” (Hillman, 1979, p. 89). The memory in language becomes mythic when deconstructed far enough. These ancient and modern myths are the fabric of the stories of our lives, I believe. As I will suggest in chapter 4.

Myth would not allow itself to be ignored in this study, intervening like a fatal attraction whenever my ruminescence wandered into primordial *terra incognita*. Theory is, after all, also derived from *theoria*, a reference to an



Ancient Greek delegation from a polis "going to see" a god (*theos*) in its temple, or going to consult an oracle (Morris, 1982). So, in this curriculum theorizing, my second chapter is a sort of intellectual autobiography charting my course betwixt and between mythology and pedagogy.

Chapter 3 explores the hints of chapter 2 with speculative philosophy drawn mainly from the work of Bergson and Whitehead. It freely speculates on the possibilities opened out in the space of so-called postmodern science (Griffin, 1988) and visionary physics (Toben & Wolf, 1982) about the force of memory in the world, including the uncertain world of particle physics.

I go directly into myth in chapter 4, reviewing the mythic idea of memory as eternal return (Eliade, 1954, 1963) or profane separation from the world (Eliade, 1959). Then I approach myth as a primordial form of language (Kristeva, 1989) and as the "solid" images which Jung and Hillman consider to have preceded internalized conception. Images, appearing from the (sudden?) expansion of awareness through mindfulness, are approached as the archetypal source of imagining. Archetypal psychology as a unique approach to curriculum theorizing has been seldom invoked, except in the work of Ronald E. Padgham (1985, 1989) and David Jardine (1992).

Chapter 5 changes its main source of research materials to those drawn from the mythopoeic memory previously invoked. The poetic and the paradoxes of post-structuralism, as well as some inspirations drawn from the vast literature of Eastern sacred writing, are used to support a more personal

autobiographical chapter than chapter 2—recalling fantasies and underlying emotional patterns—somewhat along the lines of Jung's *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1963), though hardly of such quality or depth. Here, I experiment with creative style in an attempt to summon the realm of archetypal presences and indicate potentials for metamorphosis.

My last chapter's title, "*Coda*," indicates that it is not a conclusion to careful, cautious, and logical arguments which have built one upon another from chapter 1 through 5 to a relentless and irresistible conclusion. Instead, I attempt to summarize the major points concerning memory and autobiography I have portrayed. I further take some of the residue of my theorizing on memory and suggest an approach for narrativizing or deconstructing the habitus of students, and evoking the imaginal springs of memory to desired "architectures."

## **Chapter 2: Abyssal Masks**

*Transparency. To let the light not on but in or through.  
To look not at the text but through it; to see between the lines;  
to see language as lace, black on white; or white on black,  
as sky at night, or in the space on which our dreams are traced.*

(N.O.Brown, Love's Body, p. 259)

**§Mythic Conflict: Hill Gods, Town Gods.** Mythology and pedagogy have been interrelated from the moment of my first encounter with teaching. My first time in front of a class entwined the two forever like the serpents around the caduceus of Hermes. In the strongest sense of myth as being a sort of psychic substrata, of course, not only pedagogy but studenting and even my wild childhood play in the sandhills outside of town were based on vague storylines which could be traced (had there been anyone to do so) to the ancient cultural narratives collectively called myths. Every crumbling tunnel I explored was a labyrinthine quest, each "King of the Castle" battle royale on a steep but soft sandhill was a fight to the finish for temporary glory: like the single year of kingship for the consort of the eternal queen, like the Achillean life—glory over longevity! Battles and explorations, tests of courage and endurance: were they initiations of the soul for the heroic life to come?

The slower initiation through the school system—which took place in the de-natured town—only seemed repressive and confining. I did not know that its cellular grouping, its cloistering, its ability hierarchy, its graded progression, and its teachers who kept order and knew the knowledge for which we were expected to strive were all part of another mythic complex—going back through mediæval Europe and the Roman dispensation, to Plato (and Apollo), and to Christianity and the ultimate absent father of monotheism.

It seemed the two mythic cycles I lived were usually in conflict. One was physically aware, outside the school, outside the home, outside the town, and it led to powerful impressions of both some imminence and an immanence. Something was present, was “far more deeply interfused” (Wordsworth, 1798) and always there was the rich sense of Nature waiting, of something ...about to happen. The power of direct enculturation—parents, teachers, everyone—was such, however, that a life without school never was really seen as an option. I was pushed by my parents, got my marks, and attempted to preserve the feral Pan, or the hero-in-waiting, in my soul. The journeys seemed parallel but, in an open universe, forever separate.

Years later, my first pedagogical experience was foisted upon me and the mythic seeker met the mythic priest. The experience was both unsought and, in some way, sought. It occurred with the kind of meaningful

randomness C. G. Jung (1971) called synchronicity. It may be too early in this paper to make any pagan references to fate.

I had recently returned from Europe where I had spent almost all my time in Greece. The trip had begun as one of those post-baccalaureate jaunts to the continent with a few friends. I was morose, however, and found the company of my two friends unbearable, as they found mine. We parted company in three separate directions at Düsseldorf, Jake going to East Berlin, Bryan to France and Spain, and me to Greece. There I would find some release from the word-clamps around my head and find authors to guide me back into the world from my Icarian madness to transcend it. After nine months, I found my way through North Africa to France and flew off in sunny spring. I arrived at Dorval Airport in Montreal with \$2 in a blizzard. Back in Lethbridge, I found the small city from where I had graduated quietly snowed in, somnolent under 7-foot drifts. I was twenty-two.

Setsuko called me. She was a strange-beautiful Japanese-Canadian girl who had been my friend, my clandestine lover, and who, more importantly, had taken the English department's upper level course called "Mythology" with me. She had been the young professor's favourite, and it was she and her artist friend who had read the most personal, most symbolic papers, seeing aspects of their lives in specific Hellenic deities. I, on the other hand, had been striving to squeeze my mythic universe into this one, rather than the other way, and I had read a paper on the historicity of the

Mycenean Empire and the fall of Troy, and the likely reality of the lives of Agamemnon, Clytaemnestra, Orestes, and Elektra. I was out of tune in my approach and had stuttered through my paper. I considered the course a humiliation and humbly had accepted my 'B'. Now, after returning from the land of myth, Setsuko brought it all back to me again.

A student teacher was attempting to inculcate a language arts unit on mythology into a grade nine class at Hamilton Junior High. It seems the students found no relevance in the subject. The student teacher had heard of the young professor of mythology and had asked him to do a presentation. The professor was either indisposed or ill-disposed so he had called Setsuko to speak instead. She had many excuses, but mainly this poet/dancer/insurance agent was anxious about speaking to a roomful of hostile grade nines. She had heard I was back and offered me a lemon meringue pie if I would speak in her place.

Unable to resist such forces (and others, no doubt), I found myself being introduced to a large class silently staring at me with a mixture of determination and blatant curiosity. It was like that: My earlier whirl of doubts, wishes, other timetables, and rough planmaking simply evaporated and, suddenly transported it seemed, I found myself there being sized up.

I probably was something unusual at that time in that place. The student teacher, my age, had affected a neatly-trimmed beard, tweed jacket and a tie, and I noted the curved pipe he carried in his pocket. I still had

longish hair and my North African tan had not yet faded. I was wearing a shirt which looked Slavic or 19th century: flowered chest panel, the rest white, no collar, and in-sewn arm garters. No one had to know the label said "Funky, Groovy Fashions." I was introduced as just having returned from a year in Greece.

At this time, I had read my share of mythic tales, literature, and my old major, philosophy. I had not, however, read many of the interpreters of myth who have become so popular today. I had dug up a little Freud and a little Jung, and in anthropology a little more of the French structuralist, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966), the animist, Tylor (1891/1958), and the functionalists, Durkheim (1915/68) and Malinowski (1926). In literature courses, I had encountered Robert Graves (1948/72, 1960/80), with his notion of myth being patriarchal propaganda to cover up and validate the overthrow of the "White Goddess" by Indo-European hordes, and the enigmatic Northrop Frye (1951/84), who like Jung and Lévi-Strauss in their way, perceived universal patterns in myth and literature. These views seemed too scientific or too abstract to satisfy my understanding at the time, yet myth felt strangely meaningful and there was a need in me to know why.

The only writers who had understood myth in a way that stirred me deeply by then were the psychiatrist, Rollo May (1969, 1970), who named the *daimonic* as any force capable of possessing the daily mind, and that avenger of the id, Norman O. Brown, who in his *Life Against Death* (1959)

proclaimed that the repression imposed by the superego in its abhorrence of desire was driving us to yearn for the apocalyptic grande finale.

When I heard from Setsuko, I had been immersed in the netherworld of Henderson and Oakes' *Wisdom of the Serpent* (1963), and that was what led me into my ravings at Hamilton Jr. High about each of us having a personal quest to transform or transcend our "chronic" selves, but which our word-walled consciousness so reasonably resisted.

The students listened, I felt, with some intensity and Setsuko watched with shining eyes. I found myself warming to my subject as though I had never talked about anything so important in my life before. I forgot to stutter. I even said that school systems and too rigid long-term plans can get in the way of the quest for discovery and integration of the soul. They loved the hint of anarchy and many who likely never listened due to some sort of passive resistance listened now. I was telling them they weren't just prisoners of an imposed educational system, the monastery myth of fallen life.

At the mention of the school system, the questions started. The late-sixties' bugaboo of "relevance" rose up alive and well in the seventies. "I mean, how is this mythology going to help get us jobs?" Ah, the new relevance of the 'Me' generation, I thought, and I went to town asking them if that's all they thought education was about. I sat down on the teacher's desk and a wide-ranging dialogue ensued on the purposes of education and the



school system. Most, it was revealed, simply had assumed that school was what eventually led to gainful employment: security.

I knew employment was important (though I was without it at that time), but felt the need for them to hear other voices. I asked them if they thought their lives were only about getting jobs and then hanging on; I asked if, perhaps, some courses were not trying also trying to raise their consciousnesses. When they wanted to know more I found myself saying things I had never thought through: I brought up the things they cared about, like relationships, like adventures. I said mythology provides models for each of our silent seeking. It activates the winged horse of imagination to invigorate our lives and provides them with a sense of journey, of significance. Through myth, we realize we deal on a daily basis with such things as fate, dragons, sirens, and lotus-eaters—the trials and temptations along the path of the journey through life. I had trouble describing the goal; it always seemed to be a princess or golden ring, or golden fleece, or holy grail, but sometimes it was out and out apotheosis (as it was for Herakles and Psyche and Siddhartha).

This brought out the obligatory questions about Christianity, which has its own ideas about eternal life. The discussion got quite lively when I pointed out that the serpent in Middle Eastern myths is more often than not the guide who leads to wisdom (Henderson & Oakes). The Gilgamesh story indicates that the serpent is eternal (Richardson, 1989). The sacred tree

associated with it is often interpreted as the image of the Goddess, herself (Henderson & Oakes; Brown, 1966; Godwin, 1981).

Now came the Garden of Eden questions. Here I tried a little Robert Graves on the old patriarchal paradise. I noted that God did not want humanity to gain knowledge. As in other myths, it was the serpent who led them to understanding. God wanted humanity to remain a witless animal to keep his garden. When he realized his garden-keepers had “eaten of the tree of knowledge,”—that is, become conscious, thinking beings—he cast them out into the world where all the hardships of life would become our experience. Naturally, there was the usual cry that Adam and Eve were being punished for disobedience in listening to Satan (and there was implied blame on Eve, too). I reminded them that there was another tree in the garden that God felt he had to protect at all costs: “Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Genesis 3:23). This was the tree of eternal life, and, to avoid the possibility that humanity become as gods, Yahweh cast them out for he is “a jealous God” (Exodus 20:5), presumably aware of the tree of life's association with the Magna Mater.

I closed, leaving them in some consternation by saying that many of the pagan myths implied the potential for using the serpent of wisdom to actually transcend our physical limitations here on Earth and “become as

gods." Yahweh, himself, may be understood as the archetypal dragon protector of the ultimate boon (Campbell, 1949) who wished to keep us unconscious and who yet wishes to keep us mortal. Some may have thought me a Satanist. I was not, but I did not know at that time that I had rediscovered Gnosticism (Godwin, 1981).

It was a day, no doubt, that changed me forever. The young people walked me to Setsuko's car, jabbering at me and asking questions about Greece all the way. I talked to the student-teacher a couple of weeks later and he told me they were still talking about the presentation. I found this pleasant for the ego, of course, but also humbling. I had gone right from my nice planned talk on mythic heroes as good examples and had indicated instead a "pagan path of perfidy." I found myself as much surprised by the words cascading from me as were the students. I decided my "third eye" had worked so well because (a) I truly was excited about—had given myself to—my subject-matter, and (b) I took the plunge when their questions led me to unexpected waters. Of course, I had neither contract nor paycheque.

Of course, such a one-shot encounter filled me with inflated ideas of my pedagogic potential. I still did not intend to become a teacher, but a sense of destiny hovered about me. I would be on the watch for dangerous ideas which could limit or forbid my freely chosen quest.

After moving north to Edmonton and roughing out a novel, I soon found the need for bare essentials overcame any artistic impulse. I worked

here and there, ice-cream maker to construction labourer, but, after a day on such jobs, I was simply too tired or bored to write.

Writing had become my Pegasus. I had travelled but had found mainly thieves, self-deceivers, and crowds. It is only now, looking back through the seven veils of memory, that I realize that such on the road strife is the very stuff of adventure. Then, however, I had determined to pursue my quest on paper. Failure to become successful did not deter me. It was like standing up to the gangs in high school, I told myself. You might not win the first round, but if you just keep getting back up, you have shown some nobility of soul. If I became a poor unknown writer, at least I would be a man whose inner quest continued its night-sea journeying (Campbell, 1949).

I had left Canada for Greece in near pathological condition. During my B.A. days, my readings had all grown from experiences which were aimed at mystical awareness, at transcendence. Aldous Huxley (1956) and Tim Leary (1965) had urged me up and out. I had read the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1931/60), perhaps containing a message I should have heeded about the "place" of ultimate transcendence: nowhere at all. I had experienced a rapturous self-transcendent unity with Nature, it seemed, but had also afterward been sucked back within subjectivity, unable to explain.

I had gone to philosophy because I so desperately needed answers. I discovered only more questions and that what anyone says is somehow wrong or incomplete. Thinking became an obsession which I hated, not

even sure the thoughts I heard were any longer my own. My own memories seemed to sink toward an unnameable dread. In my yearning to realize myself beyond my body and mind, I had ironically become a prisoner within the mind's echo chambers, and the body had not been transcended but was instead dragged around like a useless appendage. I lost interest in sports, socializing, and even in sex. There was so much noise! I slunk through graduation, and it was then I went to Europe.

Aside from merely being in Greece, it was two novelists who reminded me of the life given by Nature to be lived, even if we can't discern why. I read my first Henry Miller book at the mega-ancient sacred temple ruins of Dodona (Dodoni, today), where I had arrived on my motorbike. It is said to have once had a great oak (shades of the Goddess) which whispered clues to the seeker's destiny. I listened, but heard only the buzzing of great black bees. Doggedly, I sat down and opened Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* (1959) to the first page: "I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive."

What could this mean? Was something getting through? Later in Athens, I read the vitriol of *Tropic of Capricorn* (1961) and *Black Spring* (1963a), but I also encountered Miller's light-filled but definitely earthy paean to Greece, *The Colossus of Maroussi* (1963b), and I was in Greece.

The other text which inspired me to affirmation, to freeing myself from the living death of having to know the why of being here—untranscended at

that—was *Zorba the Greek*, by Greece's own Nikos Kazantzakis (1953).

Zorba never knew why either, but he lived fully from the heart in spite of it.

Faced with a mishap? Why, dance! In his last moments, he sprang from his deathbed, threw open the window and crowed like a dawn rooster, and died:

The release from having or knowing: existentialist gusto!

This literary legacy was with me in Edmonton. I met other fledgling authors and artists and we formed a raucous bohemian circle. I had rediscovered my body and Dionysos waged a continual war with Apollo for my time. I felt very much alive, unencumbered with morals or philosophy, and slapping out pages daily on my 1936 German typewriter. I joined my sister's academic crowd who gathered around the fireplace and took turns reading modern poetry. In the quiet stillness by the fire, concentrated suggestion flowed out so unforced and so strangely clear that I can quote it by memory still, or, perhaps, I am the one recalled by it.

It was at this time, that Setsuko sent me Joseph Campbell's *Hero of a Thousand Faces* (1949) and I obtained Henri Frankfort's *Before Philosophy* (1946/61). *Hero*, like *Wisdom of the Serpent*, seemingly looked at myths worldwide and concluded they were all variations of one archetypal "monomyth": the hero's quest. This monomyth Campbell structures into such parts as "the call to adventure," "the refusal of the call," "crossing the threshold of adventure," "attainment of magic talisman or divine assistance," "the trials," and, at the apex of adventure, "the attainment of the boon and the

sacred marriage." This is followed by the just-as-perilous "return" and "the re-crossing of the threshold of adventure with the boon."

This academic fantasy reunited me with the child in the sandhills and the riverside groves. Of course there is a quest, and each of us must deal with it (if only to burn all our energy ignoring its call!). Campbell uses his Jungian background to explain the monomyth as a symbol of our necessary journey into the unconscious to reunite with its lost contents, its "pearls of wisdom," in a *hieros gamos*, or sacred marriage. He considers it a sacred social duty, honouring life, to return after the conquest to teach others of the wonders of the hidden eternal realm, like a bodhisattva, like himself it is to be supposed (Segal, 1990). From this return, society is revitalized. It finds new energy to evolve or transform. The thought of teaching as a kind of sacred quest did trickle through—but had I thus far received the boon?.

"Myth and Reality" (1946/61), the introductory essay by the husband and wife team of H. and H. A. Frankfort in *Before Philosophy*, was the first to reveal to me the absolute otherness of mythic consciousness—that people who lived in a mythic world were not merely trying to explain things but failing to do so truly because of the lack of an exact science. They, in fact, experienced an entirely different world. For the mythic mind, "the distinction between subjective and objective knowledge is meaningless. . . . Meaningless, also, is our contrast between reality and appearance. Whatever is capable of affecting mind, feeling, or will has thereby established

its undoubted reality" (p. 20). It sounds like phenomenological philosophy, but the Frankforts describe the mythic mind as experiencing a very limited sense of personal self, a self which was buffeted about by emotions, memories, visions, and apprehensions that came to it from the surrounding world in which it partook. This sense of self could even be paradoxically maintained while wholly identifying with something else "outside" in the world: an animal, an object, another person, or even an ancestor or demon.

After certain earlier experiences I had sought for years to validate through explanation, I was pleased to find (outside of the Eastern mystical tradition) that such ego-transcending identification with natural forces was considered the usual state before the days of rational imperialism. My brother-in-law recommended Lévy-Bruhl—whom we had somehow missed in my anthropology courses—for corroboration. In his writings I was intrigued to discover his concept of *participation mystique*, with its hints of extra-sensory powers and perceptions:

In the collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves. In a fashion which is no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain what they are. . . . [Primitives] depend upon a participation which is represented in very varied forms: contact, transference, sympathy, telekinesis, etc. (1926/85, pp. 76, 77)

Obviously, such an awareness will never develop skeptical science, construct a compulsory school system, or build a civilization. Yet I found these ideas irresistibly attractive—in themselves and in my pursuit. I



imagined myself writing best in a kind of trance or possession, perhaps, by some daimonic muse or third eye. It is no wonder, I thought then, that artists tend to be eccentrics: we were shamans in contact with hidden planes of reality who despised our own personae, and often those of others.

There was a great deal of trepidation when I found myself signing up for the one year Professional Diploma/After Degree program in Education at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. I could not believe I was going to be a student again: I was an ancient 23! I was on a quest! But I was also determined. If my experiences had found their way into any kind of knowledge which had truth-value for me, then it could be and must be defended, even if in my intensity my knowledge-certainty was somewhat rigid and intolerant of the knowledge-certainty of others.

It was academic war: I wrote an 80-page paper in my Secondary English Curriculum class (while student teaching) summing up from various perspectives my emerging worldview. It was humbly titled, "Prolegomena to Any Future Educational Thought That There Ever Be Whatsoever." Despite more than fulfilling all research, length, and reason requirements, my cajoling and condescension so infuriated Professor Martin that he mocked me in comments like "the great Nixon speaks!" and "ugh!" and gave me a 'B'.

In Educational Psychology I fought the Skinnerians who might condition me from my quest and leave me content. In Educational Philosophy, I struggled to find a place for "free will" against the professor's

"hard determinism" (and found it in "creative breakthroughs"). In a very different Educational Psychology course—this one "third force" encounter and touchy/feely sensitivity groups—I rebelled against the pressure upon me at a workshop to plead for acceptance and declared I didn't "give a shit" what anyone in the circle thought about me. After being verbally and very nearly physically abused, I realized the imperative to "love" can be as totalitarian as any other. Setsuko (now my pregnant wife), who had come along, reminded me there were credits involved here so I later managed to bite the bullet and work the circle into a hugging frenzy.

Having preserved the sanctity of my intuition from the wolves of academia, it was a major change—again from the Apollonian/Athenian paradigm down to the Hermetic/Dionysian—to find myself involved in a six-week intensive summer drama workshop. I'd had only one job interview after finishing the PD/AD program with 1st Class Honours in May, but it had been in Jasper (a Rocky Mountain resort town similar to Banff but less commercialized). They offered me the job of 2/5 time nonacademic English teaching and 3/5 time Drama instruction before I left town after the interview and mini-teaching day. As a result I had to allow in the god of masks, Dionysos, and learn something of developmental drama before I could begin in the Fall. I became immersed and emotionally entangled in the 6-week 3-hour per day sessions, at the same time as Setsuko and Namiko Athena,

our new daughter, seemed to be forming a circle of two. Perhaps the seeds of a marital *fleur du mal* were planted then.

**§Threshold: Pedagogy as Quest.** And we were there, in Canada's Rocky Mountains, in the railroad town of Jasper, and I was a real teacher. My mother had been a teacher and it had seemed too undynamic as a life so I had decided earlier never to be one: There were strange readings to do and mythical novels to write. I had to live, however, and teaching could provide the bread and leave the time for my own pursuits (I thought). Moreover, I was now a man with a wife and a child and that new duty seemed very important indeed. I should have realized that the hermetic transmutations of authors, the baggage of a day's teaching, and the stability demanded by fatherhood were an unnatural *ménage à trois*.

I began to teach and all my dreams, experiences, and readings arose in my heart. I had hated school because it had tried to tell me who I was and, worse, who I must be. It had attempted to obliterate the memories of my own, true life and had superimposed a generic past. Its dogma had seemed like some plot to subvert my natural destiny. Yet I had survived, and now I was tense with purpose, even if this purpose was a teleology hidden in the centre of my mazelike quest. My students, too, would be aroused from their amnesiac apathy. I knew a second purpose: I was a man with a mission!

Campbell's lessons rested in my soul more strongly than those of Frankfort or Lévy-Bruhl. I translated his call to the mythic quest in my own style: With each class, each day, I set out to save the world.

To save the world, each of us has to save him or herself first. To do so, one must cross the threshold of adventure, deal with her/his demons and magical guides, and attain the crystal centre of the authentic Self. One must not allow "The Plot" to pacify him or to absorb her identity, because this establishment conspiracy's only purpose is to perpetuate itself indefinitely. This leads to personal stagnation and eventually to the despair which manifests in cultural suicide. An ego identified with The Plot has the same purpose: security and perpetuation. But since personal security is never absolutely attainable (the future being uncertain and the end always being near) a social ego also has the same pathology: neurotic anxiety, commonly called insecurity (which may occasionally collapse into paranoid despair).

The border guardians of this Plot are Fear and Desire. The Plot conditions us to believe security is our most important goal: It is to be desired above all else, just as destitution, its alternate, is to be feared. These twins, Fear and Desire, are the children of Insecurity, so it should be no surprise that their purpose is to drive us into needing Security, who is their offspring. But since the desire for Security has such origins, it can be seen that its shadow, fear of not attaining that desire, is always with it, as well. Expanding concurrently with the drive to security is the fall to despair. The shadow of the

desire to succeed is the desire to fail (or, to put it another way, the fear of succeeding).

The border being guarded by these twins (like the ferocious temple guardians in many locations of the Far East) is, of course, none other than "the threshold of adventure." To accept the call to adventure, the quest for the pre-ego Self (Jung, 1971; Eliot, 1944), one must pass between the socially created guardians. This does not necessarily have anything to do with becoming socially anarchistic. It seemed to me at the time that the most quiescent-appearing citizen could in fact be a secret hero on the quest for the "pearl beyond price" with which s/he could return and renew the world through transforming the relations of the world's creatures. Similarly, one is supposed to have emerged from an Eastern temple transformed, having been in the transcendent presence of a deity.

The nature of the ultimate boon, the pre-ego Self, remained unclear to me. Still young and vigorous, I could not help imagining the goal of the quest to be a conquest, and the return bringing back some sort of sacred loot. The heroic ego was strong in me, influenced by Campbell's monomyth and implicit monotheism. I would have done well to have studied the animistic/polytheistic implications of Frankfort and Lévy-Bruhl more deeply.

Dan Lindley (1991) has named three stages teachers go through. The first stage is adjusting to being in a classroom full of kids. Most teachers respond by emphasizing their separation. They display their status as

teachers and as adults. They act out of the senex archetype: serious, old, and ordered—and often find the children or adolescents respond by being irrepressible puer types: childlike, playful, and anarchic (Hillman, 1983b). The second stage occurs when the teacher identifies with her/his role as teacher and becomes comfortable there. This is senex in the guise of the intellectual traditionalist, the wise man or wise woman. Stage 2 teachers are stars of such things as STAR testing.<sup>1</sup> Most teachers stay there, perpetuating a system. Stage 3 is the transformation of the teacher into "absolute individuality" (Lindley). Here the everpresent puer is recovered, and the teacher has learned it is okay to be his or her authentic self when with a class.

It should be noted that this "authentic self" is not the same self the teacher had repressed at the beginning of her/his career. This puer has been reality-tempered through mediation with the senex. Too pure a puer on the part of a teacher, and the class feel it incumbent on them to be serious, ordered, and "old." This authentic self may or may not be the same as the (capitalized) Self which is discovered at the end of Jung's individuation process. Jung's Self has no mask or persona in and of itself, but is an archetype which uses a persona and its personality to unite with the world.

It should be clear by now that I began my teaching career as a missionary anarchist, a stage not recognized by Lindley. I preached

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<sup>1</sup>Louisiana state's teacher evaluations under Gov. Buddy Roemer

intensely about remembering who you are, speaking up when oppressed, and listening to the voices within (whose source I conceived as deities). I told them that whether they were “rejects” or valedictorians, they were all slaves of a system. But to be rebel to your own destruction, I told them, is only to glorify the victor. To be a rebel who always sweats the small stuff is to be just a rebel in short pants. Freedom exists in going through the given—by choice—but also keeping a private self in reserve. It means the burden of making each decision on your own, even if that decision agrees with the one made by the powers-that-be. In short, freedom is possible—but freedom is the greatest responsibility of all. I had no Mount but I walked on desks.

This worked great for the first while; the kids were hugely entertained. The class-most-warned-about was my English 013 group, newly de-streamed from their academic mainstream cohorts. They were, for the most part, transfixed by my near-Swaggertian performances. I taught the more subtle poems of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, and Dylan Thomas. I taught very few short stories, but had them write them instead. Often I read aloud to them. If their attention lagged and whispering broke out, I would get louder, until I was real loud. When that wore out, I would read while walking up and down the rows of the student desks. Yes, they enjoyed me, the entertainer. Maybe they were pleased by my faith, I don't know.

I taught Drama the same way, with energy, and some subtlety. I was not concerned, at first, with play-production (as the realist, retiring

Englishman former Drama teacher had insisted). I used my notes from my summer course and various guide books, especially Brian Way's *Development Through Drama* (1967) which roused in me the fervour for deepening consciousness, exploring psychic complexes, and opening personalities to hidden wells of emotion and deeper springs of inspiration. Here, it seemed, was a finer, more ancient way to get others to cross the threshold of adventure: No need to harangue them into taking the bold step away from ego-identification and into the Sacred Way of the Mysteries.<sup>1</sup>

Now they could experiment with imaginative adventures and imaginative identities, either mimicked from the world or "called-up" from among the repressed personality complexes below. Their quests could now begin where all quests, all myths, and all knowledge began: in memorial images and stories, like Jung's archetypes (1971).

I learned how to teach from my Drama classes faster than my English ones. In English, it took little time for me to realize that many of my students had lost the faith in themselves to even venture a guess of their own as to a poem's meaning, much less to write a narrative that someone else might read (that Mr. Nixon might even read aloud!). Moreover, though they rode happily along when I carried them with my missionary energy, when I showed up more subdued or wanted them to work in group or on their own, they simply fell back into habits revealing a complete disinterest in scholastic

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<sup>1</sup>Leading from Athens, the "Sacred Way" was the brick-walled road to Eleusis where the famed mystery rites were performed (Godwin, 1981).



activities. No wonder, of course: the system had told them that nothing was expected of them academically. My only response was another "Don't let them tell you who you are or what you can do!" type of speech. It worked, but only when I led. Was I creating followers?

In Drama, my classes were composed of mixed grade levels, though they did separate high school (10, 11, 12) from junior high. No one had told the administrators that the gap between grades 7 and 9 was much vaster than two grade levels. They all did fine in drama games, in physical movement, in passive imaginative exercises, and in small group work. But when actual improvisational work involved the grade levels mixing, the resistance was Spartan. The difference in size made the grade nines dominative, but the emotional gap was often insurmountable.

My initial response had been, as usual, to fire up my rocket boosters, move rapidly from group to group, make sure everyone was involved, and often shoot off ideas and/or roles if they were lacking. I wanted them to discover, but if they did not seem to do so or not do so rapidly enough for me, I would put the director's ring in their collective nose and pull.

I soon built a reputation in Jasper Jr./Sr. High School for being an effective rookie who simultaneously was plagued with class control problems. My first semester was an initiation through fire: I had no preparation time, taught Drama all morning and English all afternoon. I inspired my students, yes, but my inspiration was sometimes misunderstood

as a direction to break rules. I was so teacher-centered that I may have seemed a Pied Piper, and when, at last, my adrenaline levels evened out and I ceased to play, many of my students simply found themselves lost in the woods and they responded with appropriate frustration.

In Drama class, however, I soon learned to let the groups work out their own projects. I discovered my patience could have an insistence of its own and that sudden inspiration on their part was often the result. I let them work out their thematic improves as they felt, and finally I began to learn with them. Though I received many complaints about noise levels, our little reality creations would sometimes lead to insight, or to laughter, or to tears. The junior highs proved to be the most spontaneous and open to experimental experience, though they could also be volatile.

My fixation with the mythological guides behind the cloistered classroom representation of advancing levels continued to assert itself. That spring, I wrote a play called *The Three Fates* set mainly in some cloud-bedecked Kingdom of the Gods: The gods play happily, pleased to exist because mankind worships and obeys them. The creators on Earth, however, have no need of gods for they create or discover as a way of life. When creativity becomes universal, the dominance of the gods will end. In anger, the King God wishes to destroy these creators but his Old Seer reminds him he would then have to destroy all the human race since

everyone is a potential creator in his or her own way. (That would be the gods' fall, too, since gods need worship for their existence.)

Frustrated, the King God sends the Old Seer into the timeless centre of the Abyss to meet the Three Fates. Not from obedience, but foreknowledge, they agree to pretend they are the King God's prisoners and thus withhold the spark of creativity from the cosmos. The earthly creators cease alright, but the gods and their courtiers become apathetic, as well, and no longer even have the inspiration for play, no matter how decadent. The beautiful human dancer the King of the gods had amorously pursued is now willing to submit, because without a destiny "nothing matters anyway" (Nixon, unpublished). He realizes that he no longer cares about obtaining his prize and in understanding and (existential?) sadness, he has the Seer set the Fates free. Creation and destiny are activated. The play ends with the creators on Earth in intense activity, and the gods and their minions playing heartily, despite the knowledge of their eventual fate: *amor fati*.

This play was done by my exuberant junior highs. It had shows in many places and was clearly superior as a production to any junior high festival winners at that time. I felt it was worth mentioning in some detail here, because the "philosophy" is both existential and romantic, as I presume my philosophy is even to this day. As I imagine it, the power of imagination is the first principle of creation; it is found in "commemoration" (Casey, 1987b) or the lowermost molten strata of the deep unconscious and it is in the air of

the sunlit woods of the world. But when imagination submits to order and control, it ceases its main activity, and the source of culture is lost.

The first manifestations of imagination are the galactic vortices or gravital complexes to which Jung (1953 ff.) applied the term, archetypes or "primordial images," but James Hillman (1975b, 1983a) considers these so inchoate in themselves as to be meaningless. As imagination imagines these whorls of potential into images, we find ourselves facing the "Gods" (Hillman, 1980. Hillman's capitalization). Any god-image may partake of essences of one or more ineffable archetypes, so god-image and archetype are related but not necessarily identical. Like storm centres, they are always in motion and exist only as part of a continuum by their differentiation from other storm centres. When the god-image has constellated enough essences to be representable, to be a face for us to face, experience imagined for the god becomes inevitable, as well as a gravital complex of memory-associations.

The experiences of the gods with each other and with us are created and repeated as the foundational narratives of a culture, the field of stories and images we term mythology. We are each cultural products, afloat in culture, and these primal narratives chart the flow of emotion, the dart of thought, the stuff of dreams, and, perhaps, a culture's destiny (Hillman, 1986). When we tell our own stories, whether personal vignette or doctoral dissertation, they strut and fret within the preinscribed courses of the primal

mythic riverbeds (Frye, 1951/84). Mythologies, themselves, need not be linguistic representations; they may be found as well in the form of ritual or iconography. All are representations of the paradox of the imaginal: both here and not here, both private and communal, both cultural and natural.

Jung's archetypal explanation of myth is sometimes understood to be reductionist (Keller, 1989), to leave us as predetermined as behaviorists or neurobiologists would expect. If the archetypes are merely generic instincts, then this may well be so. In that case, the drive runs its course, the individual leaves the stage and is heard no more, culture stagnates into meaningless repetition—eternal return?—and eventually dies of boredom or is replaced.

My play had drawn strange links between free expression and fatalism, and I continued to attempt mediation. It is here where I saw the necessity of the journey of the mythic hero. I had by now completed Joseph Campbell's 4-part *Masks of God* series, and the lesson had been deeply ingrained in me that, unlike *The Hero of a Thousand Faces* who seemed bent on conquest, the cultural paragon of *Masks* was understood as a shaman, an artist, or a seer. S/he was a transformer of culture who broke new ground or changed the airwaves—so unlike the priests of tradition or the enforcers thereof. Campbell claimed a direct link between the early neolithic religious visionaries and cave painters of his *Primitive Mythology* (1969) and the writers, dreamers, and artists of the twentieth century West of his *Creative Mythology* (1968).

Still, I had carved my psychic image out of Homer, and the hero archetype smoldered beneath the surface. My favourite poem was "I Am A Cowboy in The Boat of Ra," by Ishmael Reed (1969). I continued to feel oppressed by systemization, and this was not helped in Jasper by a painfully plodding principal who had received his master's degree with a thesis on flytying methods for fishing.

I had most success with those needing identity or recognition. The core of the original English 013 rowdies managed to graduate and bought T-shirts proudly proclaiming themselves "Yahoos," as I had once named them. A group of the nonacademic lads had done a play with me on some down-and-out bums in New York. They rehearsed more than I asked and when the performance came it was the first time as director I could sit in the audience and confidently watch a flawless performance.

**§Mythic Amnesia: Pedagogy as Conquest.** My romantic hero of the oppressed, however, was, perhaps, arrogant in being so. Many began to consider me a troublemaker (my social climbing spouse among them). When things began to bog down in gossip and quarrels, I simply romanticized myself into an existential hero. My actions accorded with my memories of them; others' memories were too self-centered to recall fairly. Less the choice of abyss or treasure than the Sisyphean struggle, itself: Onward, without hope, without glory, without love.

When I quit, I loaded my backpack and hiked the 120 miles around the north boundary of Jasper Park alone. On the 11-day journey, I toted along Kazantzakis's epic poem, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* (1958). In that tome, Odysseus becomes the paragon of the determination to live for its own sake: "Life is an uphill struggle, against impossible odds, totally devoid of hope" (p. 297). When I wandered my despairing way into a little room near English Bay in Vancouver, I kept that phrase above my bed. I knew that if I could rouse myself to work on my ancient typewriter after facing that message each day I could deal with anything.

I completed my novel and rejected it. I dabbled in Tibetan meditation (the poster had proclaimed: "The Battle of Ego"). Relationships were short. I went broke and found myself all at sea as a deckhand on a fishing boat. It was when I was seasick on the rocking deck in the pelting rain and gutting my 100th salmon that the thought of teaching again trickled in.

I wrote to various jobs and while I waited for a response I waited tables and lived in East Vancouver on Gravelly Street. Plagued with remorse and self-doubts, I began to fear. I feared becoming a social outcast, a lost soul. I feared disintegration. It occurred to me that if living is the only reason to live then survival is its own purpose. Maybe I had been wrong to buck the system (or to have done so openly). Setsuko had once said, "Icarus should have flown at night."

*Setsuko, Namiko:* Maybe I had been wrong not to follow Setsuko's daily lectures on guidelines for upward social mobility, for societal conquest. Where was I now—Gravelly Street? For the first time, I was ready to *work* as a teacher, rather than *live* as one. Could it be that fear is the strongest impetus to conformity?

Another perspective on the hero myth found its way in timely fashion into my hands through Erich Neumann's *Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954). Applying an array of ancient texts and mythic tales, Neumann illustrates Jung's basic notion of the first half of life requiring "heroic" ego development and separation from the collective unconscious and the second half an integration of the ego with its source. Neumann goes beyond the noncommittal imagery of Jung's labels, however, and identifies the primal source as the Great Mother or, simply, the Goddess. And he identifies the psychic danger of ego-inflation (or *hubris*): "The stronger the masculine ego consciousness becomes, the more it is aware of the emasculating, bewitching, deadly, and stupefying nature of the Great Goddess" (p. 63).

This awareness may manifest as terror, and thus repression, of all things female, as so many misogynist myths testify; or it may act out the repression as a desire for the absolute escape of death (as in the phallic power contests of "missile envy"). More controversially, the ego may also, according to Neumann, abnegate this repression and seek identity with the



memory of the passive "Great Goddess Unconsciousness," resulting in the feminization of the masculine ego. He understands all self-directed consciousness to be a masculine, heroic endeavour—whether undertaken by man or woman—and unconscious quiescence to be the yin principle.

Whatever the truth may be, I knew I was fast approaching 30 and needed to change. Perhaps the time of battles, ego and otherwise, had ended and I could now work, as they say, within the system. Foolishly, I imagined the system to be somehow similar to the collective unconscious, to Neumann's Great Goddess as bride. When I got the temporary appointment in Crawford Bay, British Columbia, I unknowingly was entering into Lindley's second stage of teaching (though I had completely inverted stage one).

There have been many critics who have accused the institution of schooling in North America as having a secret agenda to ensure the continuance of privilege (see chapter 1), or, at least, as mimicking a social structure which oppresses (Anyon, 1988). Paulo Freire (1984) talks of the dream of many oppressed being to become an oppressor. I was now determined to do the right thing, keep a low profile, and to pass the students through the system in an orderly procession. I do not know if I wished to be an oppressor, but I was certainly ready to be a repressor of all my notions of retaining the early vision which had to do with authenticity of experience in Nature, and the private quest to realize in consciousness the patient

presence I had felt guiding me there. Of course, this was denial. Of course, it did not work.

When I was a kid, I had never been happy playing the games the other kids seemed to be content with. Cowboys soon got tiring, but when I did play I became neither Roy Rogers, Kid Colt, nor Rex Allen. I made up a tough character who seemed to me to have the essence of the lone frontier hero. I called him "Kid Trouble." He seemed to follow me into later life. It was a shock of recognition to learn the name, Odysseus, also seems to translate as "trouble" (Finley, 1977).

My pedagogical odyssey continued in this way in Crawford Bay and later in my two and a half years in the consolidated high school in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. I did unit plans. I shouted in class. I attempted to keep order, even in my junior high Drama classes. Some kids liked me, some did not. Trouble came in this incarnation in Crawford Bay when the seniors complained I was too separate, too judgmental, that I gave their opinions no place.

It seemed to me I was willing to discuss, to exchange ideas, but these students in an isolated valley on Kootenay Lake in central British Columbia were all too ready to make sweeping statements based on nothing, or hearsay, at best: "My cousin saw a million Paki immigrants getting off planes in Calgary!" This was fearful in an area where the mines and most of the lumbering had closed. I demanded facts. An opinion without a rational

backup meant nothing. I was confronting naked irrationality (like that found in Nature) and I was siding with the order and control of the god of culture, Apollo, and the god of authority, Zeus.

When a large grade twelve girl from one of the few prosperous families in the valley attempted to get too rambunctious in class, I sternly had her sit down. Still, she stayed after class and began to openly flirt, and I rather rudely (and nervously) sent her home. Like a bad TV-movie, she complained to the principal that I had kept her after school and come on to her. I was fully exonerated by witnesses who had heard me rebuking her foolishness but the whole valley had cabin fever after a long winter and gossiped hungrily. I was glad to leave.

After a year of doing theatre in Calgary (with only modest success but with the triumphal return of Dionysos), I took the job in Crowsnest Pass, away from the temptations of Calgary. Again, I was determined to do it right; again, I was going to labour at this job and defeat it. I did it their way. My students were rebellious—more than I had ever experienced anywhere—and I was miserable. I read only science fiction and, miserably, determined to stick it out. I do not think I was an ideal teacher. When they began to push compensatory classes for slow learners at me and the small town was too concerned about whom I was dating (and when, and where), I retired again. I was the same age at which Alexander the Great and Jesus of Nazareth had died—after fulfilling their destinies.

By that time, it seemed clear to me that my destiny had long ago gone on without me. Years before, I had been sent to Concordia, a St. John's Lutheran boarding school in Edmonton, Alberta, at the beginning of grade ten (our family of four each leaving Saskatchewan for a new locale). I read nothing, it seemed, but myth and Ancient Greek literature and history. I had the opportunity at Concordia to study Latin, which would lead me into a major in Classics—Ancient Greek and Roman Language and Civilization—upon beginning university. For various reasons, loneliness being one, I transferred to Lethbridge where my mother had moved and where only French was taught as a foreign language. Of course, the mythic significance of returning to mother was more than losing Latin as a key to the future. Campbell's "denial of the call"? Neumann's "uroboric return"?

When I finished high school in Lethbridge, I was again determined to major in Classics, but the University of British Columbia, which has a fine program, was very expensive. I was talked into spending the preliminary year doing non-major subjects at the U. of Lethbridge. Of course, I retained most of my friends from high school and took full advantage of the non-enforcement of attendance. I was so blithe as to skip the final essay for an anthropology course called "The North American Indian." That summer, I was working as a deckhand on a Department of Transport shipping lane barge in the Northwest Territories when I received notices in quick succession: 1) that I had flunked "The North American Indian," and 2) that

UBC could not accept me. On my boat on the Great Slave Lake, I learned I had again "missed the boat" and that the lake was well-named.

It was the confusion of the following months on Vancouver Island and the violent scatterings of the illusion of self that coerced me into studying philosophy when I returned to classes. In philosophy, however, I found what seemed to be kindred spirits in Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and—perhaps the beginning of the strange pairing of romantic idealism and existentialism—Bergson and Merleau-Ponty. I wanted only a clear explanation which would make the world acceptable to me, and, perhaps, me to the world. Fate (or teleology) were no longer factors.

So I still thought after leaving Crowsnest Pass and returning to nearby Lethbridge to sub and write—exactly 10 years after I had left it the first time to go to Edmonton and write (as strange a timespan as the 9 gestation months I had spent across the Atlantic). If that did not seem to have the chilly touch of metric karma, my next position certainly did.

**\$Penance.** The University had been reconstructed across the Oldman River in the time I had been gone. The Lethbridge Community College was now situated where the University had been. It was this college which now hired me to drive to the Peigan Indian Reservation each day and teach Adult Upgrading. Thirteen years after flunking my course on the North American

Indian, I was going to do time among the North American Indians, themselves.

The tribal reserve of the North Peigans, an offshoot of the Blackfoot nation, is a remarkable place, if mainly for all the wrong reasons. Here I had gone full circle, returning with nothing, and was now to do penance (it seemed) on one of the smallest, poorest reservations in Canada. I had lost so much and experienced so much, it somehow seemed right I should work with a group whose habits were really unknown to me. It may have been penance, but it was a chance to leave the usual world behind:

The nature of the hero is as manifold as the agonizing situations of real life. But always he is compelled to sacrifice normal living in whatever form it may touch him, whether it be mother, father, child, homeland, sweetheart, brother, or friend. (Neumann, p. 378)

I could still console myself with Neumann: Surely here at the bottom rung, my labours would find their turning point.

The program was sponsored by Canada Manpower, the division of government concerned with employment, so the idea, at first, was for us to get our students through the GED. After passing that, they were to leave the reserve and take some sort of employment training program and, eventually, get a job. In practice, this seldom happened. The students were paid a small amount to attend class and it soon became clear to me that this was the reason most of them were there. Babies would be brought to class, and homework was usually out of the question. The students had no intention of

leaving their families on the reserve, but the Manpower stipend was more than the government welfare on which most subsisted.

My part was to teach English and "something else." I started the something else with Psychology but soon moved into History. My partner did the Math and Science programs. Over the years, I convinced the officials to do away with GED accreditation since it was so rarely recognized, and to institute actual college upgrading courses for college credit. Then I found myself teaching such things as the provincial curriculum for Social Studies 010, which included early Canadian history. This history attempted to be unbiased but usually limited to a page or so the pre-European era in Canada. My students did not complain, but I sought wider materials on the native cultures of our nation.

No administrators followed us to the reserve so I did have the unpressured sense of freedom with my classes: freedom in what I taught and in how I taught it. Canada Manpower was basically concerned that whoever achieved grade twelve credit could read and write at that level and I made sure that was so. It was the "how" of what I taught that eventually underwent such a subtle metamorphosis.

I was nervous when I started. I did not know what to expect. These were adults, and these were Indians. I feared resentment from them, but it only seemed to appear when someone provided the leadership for it.

This was the unique culture I discovered on this little scattered collection of rundown houses without trees, gardens, or streets, and often without windows: The reserve spans a major highway and has towns on either side. The buffalo are gone and the last people to have seen the buffalo are gone. The inherent native culture had virtually disappeared. The Indians walked about the prairie like ghosts in the wind, a people who did not remember their gods.

But they did have a subculture: It was built on the solidarity of poverty, isolation, and resentment for those who had made them this way. The remnants of rituals which had been preserved had gone underground and were usually done in secret, but nobody seemed exactly sure of their purpose any more. If there was no one around to resent, they resented each other or themselves, and often there were suicides and drinking deaths.

This time I did not begin as a missionary—they had had enough of that. I tried being low-key. They seemed content to silently labour their way through the course workbooks which had been recommended to me by my partner. They very seldom asked for help unless I explicitly circulated and asked them. It was strange: I seldom taught a lesson because everyone was at a different place in the coursework. Figuring to treat them as adults, I seldom strove to motivate them. I took attendance but did not belabour the point when it became random, after all, they were paid only for the days they attended.



It seemed a comfortable distance—from their world and from my world. I was a stage two teacher frozen in time, between two worlds. I had seen the face of the Goddess in her guise as Medusa and I was petrified by the “intolerable image” (Micklem, 1979). All I wanted to do was hold on, a death-grip on duty. Still, their heavy passivity annoyed me and I wished to see them vent some anger (which was surely there) at their present situation.

It was Cornelius who began the change and awakened in me memories of the mythic mind in a darker light than the “Nature's children” image I had conjured up. I had found 3 large coffee-table type books replete with paintings, photographs, and charts. They covered Canadian prehistory and history from the Precambrian to the various treaties with which the Canadian government annexed huge parcels of land and allocated reserve settlement on the natives. The books referred to the Indians as “Children of Eden,” and Canada’s Europeanization was “Deception and Conquest,” so, with such a sympathetic portrait of the Indians and the mammoth opaque projector, I had every reason to think we could enter into heated, but reasoned, discussion about the injustice of their situation.

Wrong: Generally, I did the talking, though there was a fair amount of grave agreement to some of my suggestions. After one day of outlining the treaties, Cornelius, by far the brightest student in my class, suddenly spoke up as I was ending the lesson: “It’s just whiteman bullshit.”

“What?” I asked.

"It's just whiteman bullshit. Whatta you know about it? You weren't there. You came here and planted diseases and took our land. All you Europeans—why doncha just go back to Europe and leave us alone?"

Everyone giggled, some nervously, some with pleasure. I felt the heat rise to my face. I was flustered but attempted to counter: "I can't go back, Cornelius. I'm a European mongrel from about six different countries. I'd have to go back in pieces."

Cornelius leered evilly, "Then go back in pieces, dead, all of you white trash. I just hate white." There was more laughter.

"Then there's only one racist here, and it ain't me. If you hate people because of the colour of their skin, then you, my friend, have the problem."

Cornelius stormed out and the class ended. I made no issue of it but the silence had increased in weight in future classes.

We played volleyball every Friday afternoon. Inevitably, Cornelius and his table aligned themselves against me and whoever was on my team. The first Friday I sprained my ankle to hoots of derisive laughter. I was so angered I rose and played anyway. Every Friday became a release of energy in no holds barred, very few rules, killer volleyball. The ferocity eventually led to pride and some mutual respect.

"Good game, Nixon!" Cornelius would yell and grin like a wolf.

I began to think that it was my forbearance and continued friendliness which kept the class stable. In other words, I knew what these poor

misguided souls had wrong with them. If they'd listen to me, their lives would surely improve. This *hubris*, the sheer do-gooder confidence, blinded me to the fact of my defensive ethnocentrism. I was almost beginning to feel like a leader again.

At 3:30 in the morning, my phone rang. It was Cornelius calling collect from a phone booth next to the highway. I could clearly hear the cars hissing by. He talked real slow with long silences between his words. It seems his household had begun drinking again. He had tried to avoid partaking but had been drawn in. He felt awful. Not understanding, I suggested he go sober up.

"You don't understand," he said derisively.

I suggested he tell his family to leave him alone. And, again, I found how distant I was from comprehending. The household had some family but it also included anyone else who had decided to take up residence there. I did not yet know that "drinking" did not mean a party: It meant a long, ritualistic dissipation which went on for days and which ended either when anything alcoholic (or anything in any way intoxicating) was finally consumed or when unconsciousness or death intervened.

He began to sob: "You don't know; you just don't know. It's too much. I'm just gonna walk out on the highway until it's done."

Shooting, freezing, poisoning, the railway tracks, and the highway

were the common means of leaving this soulless world. I woke up. I knew he was serious. The cars hissed ominously.

I searched deep for the right words. I gave solace. I gave advice. I encouraged: "Man, you'll be in college next year."

"I'll never make it. You know that! They never let you forget you're an Indian." His voice cracked: "I wish I was white."

This shocked me into silence.

Cornelius spoke low: "You'll never understand. You can't. I've gotta end this...hell. There's nothing you can say, because you just don't know." The phone clattered, but I still heard him breathing on the other end.

I felt something give way in me. I was absolutely ignorant and I was absolutely helpless. Almost astonished, I heard the weary resignation in my voice: "You're right, Corn. You're right. I have no idea about your life. None whatsoever. I've lived in a different world. I don't understand at all." He was silent, but I felt he was listening now. "You're gonna do what you're gonna do, and I have no idea about the reason why. There's nothing I can do 'bout that. But if you can just find some shelter, go through your horrors,<sup>1</sup> then maybe later you can come and explain it to me. You'll be considered absent with excuse until I hear from you."

It was the beginning of an interesting friendship and an aperture into the hidden life of the Peigan Reserve for me. From then on, I taught less

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<sup>1</sup>Alcoholic withdrawal

defensively and I actually began to listen when people talked, trying to hear the resonance, the intent, behind the short sentences and limited vocabulary. After a few years there, I found I was being accepted by people from the hopeless drunks (who had spat at me my first year) to the chief and tribal council.

After class, I listened to distraught wives or confused young men. I never gave much advice but it seemed to mean so much to them to be able to speak of their troubles. I began to attend some of their functions—traditional dance competitions, sporting events—on the Reserve on my days off. With increased trust, older Peigans of either sex would sometimes take me aside and hint to me of mystical secrets, or of the ancestral power of their inherited sacred medicine bundles. Eventually, I was invited to take part in the Sweat Lodge Ceremony.

The ceremony proved to be long, smelly, suffocating, and very very claustrophobic. A large group of males stuffed into a hide tent around red-hot stones among still-smoking embers was experience enough. But the chanting, chanting, chanting began to convince me I would lose my mind (if I didn't sweat my heart out first). There were moments when I could no longer tell who I was, or even that I was a separate individual. Distantly, I could hear my own voice sounding alien and singing along with the rest. I believe I even saw my hands raising little dust clouds by pounding on the ground to the insistent drumbeat, though who could have seen the dust in the smoke?

When we finally burst gasping from the dissilient pod, I found myself among the younger men being splashed with cold water by a circle of women and crazily laughing. The older men kept their dignity and walked soberly away.

It was a kind of initiation. If nothing else, it finally buried the missionary and the rabble-rouser, too. How can you preach when all you know is that you know nothing? The result of such unknowledge, however, is not self-doubt and insecurity. In a quiet way, I felt liberated, even invigorated—like a young animal first exploring its environment. My awareness felt as undirected as when I had roamed the riverside groves or the bleak sandhills as a boy, and, similarly, I again felt a sense of something immense happening, though I made no attempt to grapple with this. I soon let the sense disperse in the eternal wind.

I suppose I was passive. I suppose I could have accepted my fate if it had been to toil hopelessly on the Peigan Indian Reservation all the rest of my days. Perhaps the Indians' windblown torpor was seeping into my soul. Whatever it was, my stillness was not without fecundity.

It seemed the world came to me: not as a result of the abandonment of my pedagogical quest—this was no cause and effect progression—or even to make demands toward action. The hints of the *anima mundi* implied open doors (along with complete indifference about my choosing to enter one of them). I can only describe it as one of those crossroads of time (perhaps an

unintended "creative breakthrough") in which synchronicity made itself uncomfortably evident.

Jung (1971) describes synchronicity as "meaningful coincidence" (p. 505). Most people with any sort of peripheral awareness have experienced it: Incident after incident seems to indicate the intrusion of another reality, the deeper significance of a certain theme or a certain image. Jung, himself, gives the example of a time he vaguely noted the parallels between the fish imagery in alchemy and in Christology. For three days running he encountered fish—in children's drawings, in every article he read, in overheard conversations, in dreams, and, inexplicably, laid out on his garden fence (pp. 506, 507). It was as though the unconscious were indicating, somewhat humourously, the mysteries which lay below its wavy surface.

In my case—and it is still happening—I found the theme of metamorphosis oozing into my life like a vapourous fog sliding under windowsills and up from the basement. At first, its presence was merely distracting but, when it came between me and my fridge or my TV or my mirror, the sense of the uncanny was unavoidable.

Of course, I had read Norman O. Brown (1959) with some attention previously, and his insistence on the need to metamorphose back into unrepressed Nature, into "polymorphous perversity," or into the immediacy of the Dionysian ego had been strongly impressed on me, as had the similar ideas of Herbert Marcuse (1964) in first-year university.

Now, however, I opened my door one day and met Vireo who thought she was looking for someone else. After verbal exchange, this unique woman came through my door. Later we went through the ritual of book exchange. Her gift was Brown's *Love's Body* (1966):

The id is instinct; that Dionysian "cauldron of seething excitement," a sea of energy out of which the ego emerges like an island. The term "id"—"it"—taken from Nietzsche (via Groddeck), is based on the intuition that the conduct through life of what we call our ego is essentially passive; it is not so much we who live as that we are lived, by unknown forces. (p. 44)

These thoughts left me adrift, so I turned to poetry to find solace. I re-read "I Am a Cowboy on the Boat of Ra" then found Lawrence's "The Ship of Death" opening in an anthology. Were these watery metaphors for "unknown forces"? Where do these streams lead, I wondered. I did not think too hard for I had accepted my basic stupidity; yet, soon after in the university library, I happened upon a translation of a very ancient text which addressed my unknowing: "I have entered in as a man of no understanding, and I shall come forth in the form of a strong spirit, and I shall look upon my form which shall be that of men and women for ever and ever" (Budge, 1938, ch. 64).

It was as though the Egyptian Coffin Texts were addressing my misreading of Reed's "...Ra" poem, which was certainly meant to be ironical toward conquering heroes. The texts concern the transformation of the dead soul into Osiris for its final journey.

I began to wonder if for many years I had not been on a Campbellian quest for "the ultimate boon," but had instead been pushing a self-image



before me like a scarab pushing its ball of dung. Osiris (and Jesus, for that matter) was a paradigm of sacrifice, which a Jungian may read as the ego-sacrifice involved in the individuation process met with in the second half of life. Having "heroically" built an ego separate from its unconscious sources, the maturing individual must now allow it to become decentered (to ritually die) to become centered again in the Self. The Self is the same source as always but now it may use the ego, and other complexes, for vehicles of consciousness and action. The soul is not remembered by the ego but made active *through* it: the ego is more remembered by the soul.

In this sense, it is "we who are lived," I thought. Whether "it" be id, instinct, archetype, Self, soul, or gods, the sense of self (small "s") or ego is something lived *through*. Egoism had always seemed to be something easily identified, in me and in others, but this more primordial force (call it what you will) seemed to remain distinctly unrecognized (unconscious) by many, many people, or at least by our limited social discourse.

The young fight hardest to deny it. Perhaps being too close to the primal matrix, they fear being overwhelmed. Their great fear is "being different," and that may be the origin of those well-walled group identities:

Whereas the average individual has no soul of his own, because the group and its canon of values tell him what he may or may not be psychically, the hero is one who can call his soul his own because he has fought for it and won it. Hence there can be no heroic and creative activity without winning the anima, and the individual life of the hero is in the deepest sense bound up with the psychic reality of the anima. (Neumann, 1954, p. 379)

The anima, or soul, is understood as something to "be won" by Neumann. Perhaps this is in line with Lindley's concept of the stage three teacher as one who has attained to "absolute individuality." The concept parallels the Jungian stages which culminate in individuation (and Lindley is a Jungian).

But, I wondered, who is to do the winning, who is to direct the action if not the ego? In one of our talks, it was Vireo who reminded me of my own ideas: in the ego's security complex—in its monotheistic monologue forever taking place within its walls under the rule of repetition and determinism—thoughts are forever buzzing back and forth in oppositional evaluations. Such thoughts interminably support the habit of self above the stream, like "a hydrophobic dog" (chapter 1, p. 51), but the habitus is incapable of—even opposed to—direct creative action. Such action is a "breakthrough" of ego's walls, but if it is done often enough—a demanding task!—ego's centrality will find itself "undermined."

An insight from myth—again Egyptian—seemed to clarify the implications of Jung's theory of transformational individuation. As Neumann interprets: "The identity of Osiris, the human soul, and the prime creative force amounts to identity with the creativity of the godhead" (p. 238).

At this point, I was satisfied. It was what early play and later dramatic activity had always shown me: Whenever we do anything, we are acting. To know myself means only to know my role at the moment. Every action is an

improvisation, but we know what to do by remembering, or pretending to remember, our character's continuity. Transformation now seemed as easy as changing masks. I had not yet heard of Casey's (1987b) "body memory" (chapter 1, pp. 52-54) or I would have realized how rooted action habits are.

"But," Vireo whispered one evening, "if a mask has grown on you, such a change can be a painful experience." I made light of it, but she continued: "You treat masks too lightly. I fear for you. Without any masks, there's..."

"The authentic Self?"

"No, it's just empty: an abyss."

I pondered this but I did not know what "abyss" meant. Perhaps it was like the nirvanic void, a creative centre which was "buried treasure."

Compared to this, personae seemed such artificial decorations, a face to meet the faces that you meet, defensive and slightly foolish:

Personality is not innate, but acquired. Like a mask, it is a thing, a fetish, a fetishistic object or commodity. "I consent that Isis shall search into me, and that my name shall pass from my breast into hers." The real name of the god, with which his power was inextricably bound up, was supposed to be lodged, in an almost physical sense, somewhere in his breast, from which Isis extracted it by a sort of surgical operation and transferred it with all its supernatural powers to herself. In the famous potlatch cultures of the Indians of the northwest coast, what is wagered, won, and lost, is personality, incorporated not only in name but also in a variety of emblematic objects; in masks; also blankets, and bits of copper. (Brown, 1966, p. 94)

At this time, I was completing my part-time M.Ed. and doing a course in Educational Philosophy. Vireo was nervously advancing on her B.A. and

one of her courses was Mythology and Literature, ironically under the same English professor as my Mythology class nearly 20 years before. We both agreed to thematically approach metamorphosis but each in our own course in our own way.

My paper took a very pessimistic view of culture and human life on Earth, in general. Any rational extrapolation revealed utter catastrophe ahead, especially as the result of a cultural mindset identical to the ego, both of which paranoically seek security through "progressive" aggression against their insecurity. The insecurity is found in Earthly Nature (phylogenetically) and in instinctual nature (ontogenetically). The only hope, mad as it may be, is in a miracle (I said): the metamorphosis of consciousness and body into a state about which absolutely nothing can be known from here.

Vireo had been studying the English Romantic poets whom we had often read together. The seemingly limitless flights of their imaginations were intoxicating. Shelley was the highest flier, but it was in the more sensual Keats that Vireo found the myth she wanted, and the paradigm of metamorphosis for her paper. "Lamia" (1820) is an erotic poem which tells the story of a snakewoman who yearns for the body of real woman again so she may experience its delights, however transitory. She is granted metamorphosis by Hermes, but the process reveals itself as one of the utmost agony:

*Left to herself, the serpent now began  
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,*

*Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,  
 Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;  
 Her eyes in torture fix'd and anguish drear,  
 Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all seer,  
 Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear.  
 The colours all inflam'd throughout her train,  
 She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain.*

Lamia emerges a woman but is eventually destroyed, shrivelled like a dream, by the rationalist eye of the well-named philosopher, Apollonius.

"I think it's like that with us," she said.

"What?"

"You're going. Leaving me to be Lamia: 'convuls'd with scarlet pain'. I just hope you're not Apollonius."

"What?"

"Oh, Greg, you're so damned obsessed with *your* journey, *your* metamorphosis. You're even going to Louisiana because it's so 'down there', so 'delta of rebirth' and all that! I think you're just looking at your soul from the outside, from your ego. And you look at me the same way: Sometimes you think I'm just a bird in your goddamned tree of life, or some brief episode in your story."

**§Translucent Masks.** If the obsession continues, I do not think it is mine; it more likely possesses me than I it. Here in the land of Huey Long, I have found a mutuality of being with the people I have encountered (as I have everywhere), but I have also found different guards on the periphery: different

fears, different desires. My mythic fate to “see through” my required roles—whether teacher, student, lover, hermit, or fool—is purely my own and not to be imposed on others. To make my masks of self transparent in no way extinguishes them or their vital necessity when dealing with a world of masks. Here in Louisiana I have become less and less aware of myself: There are too many other presences, too many compelling voices. This story evaporates as I write it.

In the quietude inside, I sometimes feel I now understand Kazantzakis' Odysseus when he affirmed truth without substance: “...the soul at last had reached its ultimate task, the Act” (1958, p. 449). To take action in this sense, it seems to me, is to act through the self, not from it. It is to relieve the soul, the shadow over the abyss, from the stressful anxiety of only undertaking actions which conform to the precepts of habit and training which have constructed the ego from the outside in. These actions are, of course, often necessary, but the difference is in the invisible matter of identity: Does one *listen* only to the interminable voices which use guilt, duty, and reward to decide the march of one's day? Or does one *Act from the listening* to do the dance of one's day?

*I kindle fires in fog, I plant bell buoys on waves,  
I cut roads through the air and build all things from chaos;  
my five slave-weavers at the loom of my swift mind  
weave and unweave all life on air's firm-fibered cloth  
until I cover the whole abyss with a strong net. (p. 514)*

This entire vision of "acting" draws us into the theatre of Dionysos.

The commandments of Zeus are used to inspire order and obedience, but conceal, as well, Zeus's fraternal identification with Poseidon (god of the sea and chaos and earthquake) and with Hades. Dionysos, too, emerges from the abyss to inspire unpremeditated action (Otto, 1933/65). It is Dionysos who teaches us not only how to act, but that we *are* acting (performing) every moment of every day. This implies, yes, that "all the world is a stage" but from the Dionysian perspective, this stage is gloriously unconfined. The roles of life should all be revelled in, so Ginette Paris (1990) imagines Dionysos:

The actor does not feel he is cheating about his identity because he knows, as we do, that he is playing a role, wearing a mask. If he is not cynical ... he puts all of himself into his role and tries to be for the audience the character he pretends to be. Meanwhile the actor is not bothered about whether he is being true to his "real self." He is truly an actor. As we all are.

*Dionysos is not the God behind the mask. He is the mask.*

In our psychological culture, the quest for the real and true Self conceals an anti-Dionysian fantasy and a typically monotheistic one. We do not easily recognize Dionysos, patron of actors, who invites us to play every role, tragic as well as comic, grotesque as well as solemn, with intensity, with spirit and brio. . . . As God of the carnival, of the masquerade, he is concerned with the constant metamorphosis of identity and opposed to any fixed identification with a role. (p. 49)

Paris's statement reveals another sort of trinity in action: Our ideas of culture, self, and divinity are archetypally interwoven. The belief in a monotheistic centre of power has similarly led to a belief in a central (and authentic) "Self."<sup>1</sup> Culture ("our" culture) is understood to be a singular entity

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<sup>1</sup>Though for Jung (1971), the Self, though indeed authentic, had no attributes in and of itself. It more resembles the abyss of creative chaos.

with its own internal growth patterns and digestive practices. This “psychological culture” (Hillman, 1983b) may be understood as deriving from the subject/object split wrought by science and by the self-centered humanism of the Enlightenment. C. G. Jung was foremost a scientist.

Paris and Hillman imply that Jung, the son of a domineering Protestant minister, had not himself escaped the fantasy of monotheism with his doctrine of individuation seemingly leading to a deeper, truer Self. Hillman (1983b) has said this “Self” can be nothing other than an ego projection. How else, he asks, can that which is bottomless be said to have attributes at all?

This implicates Campbell and, perhaps, Neumann in their tendency to imply an end of the quest: the “attainment of the boon,” or the “mandalan” Self. It may implicate me in my haranguing years. Behind the mask there is nothing but fantasy. Was Vireo correct—am I obsessed only with the abyss?

Jung (1971) has stated that more “primitive” minds—animists, pantheists, polytheists—experienced their traumas through the demons and deities of the world. Now, psychological, monotheistic humanity looks only inward within an enormously inflated self to seek the source of its malaise. Since we as a civilization seem to seek only order (an order which must extend into the future), our chronic malaise is disorder. Hillman (1986) understands this as the voice of the exiled “Gods” within:

If the Gods have become diseases, then these forms of chronic disorder are the Gods in disguise; they are occulted in these misshapen, inhuman forms, and our seeing through to them there—in all forms of chronic disorder in ourselves and our city—is a grounding



act of culture. The education of sensitivity begins right here in trying to see through the manifestations of time into the eternal patterns within time. We may regard the discontents of civilization as if they are the fundamentals of culture. (p. 20)

The "seeing through" implies a seeing through our daily masks, our identification with the collective, and with the linear flow of time to those individuals and those groups who are less than content with our present order of civilization. It is to seek the god behind the malcontents. Marginalized groups would be unable to identify themselves as a group were there not an image, a deity, as the constellating gravity of this identity. As an example, Paris identifies a Dionysos for women:

Jung has made of Dionysos the archetype who frees us from the tyranny of the ego, and archetypal psychology further describes Dionysos as a path of freedom for inner oppressed woman. Her liberation cannot be the result of an intentional, calculated, heroic process; it comes when the inner Maenad finally is let out, free to feel whatever she feels, including vulnerability as well as strength, distress as well as potency. The special gift of Dionysos is that bursting energy that breaks through the internalization of Pentheus's rules and Platonic devaluation of the feminine. (p. 33)

Is release possible? Can we release Dionysos like pent-up steam (as Nietzsche cried in increasing evaporation) or can we construct Brown's Dionysian ego in the midst of the id? If we can, do we want to? How would you teach such a thing?

I may once have imagined you could, but only when I assumed there was a more real, utterly authentic self within our carefully composed faces. This present doubt makes me doubt as well Lindley's third stage of teaching as being "absolute individuality." Surely this must be only another illusion.

Yet realizing the play of masks and our infinite self-deception is only one aspect of a style of teaching which encourages seeing through. If I was teaching hoping to metamorphose Dionysian egos from Apollonian (or Jehovan!) egos, then I would be creating madness to counter madness.

Paris (1990) puts it this way:

If any given culture receives only Apollonian sunshine, it dries up and dies; conversely, if it receives too much Dionysian moisture, it rots and becomes crazy. A hyper-technologized, hyper-rationalized society is as crazy, in a way, as is an anti-intellectual rock 'n roll subculture. We need both Dionysos and Apollo. (p. 33)

I have asked myself many times: Then why work for transformation? Why believe in experientialism? Why teach in a more Dionysian mode? As I have indicated in this extended statement: Because I must. The hero-fantasy may have been eclipsed, but to deny the exhilarating sense of *presence* and creation which becomes repressed in school systems, institutions, and civilization in general, would be to undergo a kind of death. It would be to "dry up," like poor Lamia, like a hydrophobic dog.

I see the masks, and I usually try to wear an appropriate one, too. I hear the deceptions of speech which reveal poorly hidden motivations of another nature. The world we live in often seems unreal, a vast phantasmagoria of desire, anxiety, and cruelty: so many phobias, such desperate hungers. We are set against one another, defined and divided by language in the service of dissectionism and repression. The emotions we live with, however, are as real as we experience them to be.

Beneath the masks are the imaginal complexes, according to Hillman (1983a). They are fantasies, as I mentioned above, but fantasies as the only possible manifestations of the abyss, which can have no characteristics of itself (even the word “abyss”<sup>1</sup> has delusive connotations). They may be imagined as amorphous constellations always being reshaped by interaction with each other. But, being persons, we respond best (face to face) to other persons so *the faces of these complexes reveal themselves as the gods*, and there are animal-persons, too (Hillman, 1980). We are always in one such complex or another, according to Hillman (1979c), and we perceive out of it; but from the outside (as it were) such a complex may itself be perceived as a god:

All consciousness depends upon fantasy images. All we know about the world, about the mind, the body, about anything whatsoever, *including the spirit* and the nature of the divine, comes through images and is organized by fantasies into one pattern or another. . . . Because these patterns are archetypal, we are always in one or another archetypal configuration, one or another fantasy. (p. 114)

This perspective achieves a type of depth perception for me when dealing with students (and others). I would feel like a polytheistic priest to suggest that students should be taught mythology so they can “find out who they are.” There’s no doubt, however, that old cultural tales and images have a purpose in directing individual energies to rediscovering their source, rather than being rootless vegetables part of “the march of civilization.” Learning mythology, Hillman (1986) suggests, helps provide those roots:

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<sup>1</sup>Greek *abussos*: a-, not + *bussos*, bottom. (Morris, 1982)

Civilization looks ahead, culture looks back. Civilization is historical record; culture a mythic enterprise. . . . Culture, as I have been speaking of it, looks backwards and reaches back as a nostalgia for invisibilities, to make them present and to found human life upon them. The cultural enterprise attempts to peel, flail, excite individual sensitivity so that it can again—notice the "again"—be in touch with these invisibles and orient life by their compass. The key syllable in culture is the prefix "re." (pp. 19, 20)

I teach autobiography; I use imaginative writing, journal writing, and face to face dialogue to have people experience themselves in action, to "be in touch with these invisibles" and remember their placement in time without succumbing to literalism (the literal repetition-complex I once felt to be "The Plot"). Other people use such "methods" (and more) and do so with greater sensitivity than I. Yet the motivation for such facing each other, facing the gods, is perhaps not only for the demands of my particular daimon, but for the metamorphosis of culture, and, as some would have it, of the world.

In my classes, I have certainly experienced the pleasant *recognition* of one person by another who had thought they were strangers. Paris (1990) suggests Dionysian awareness of masks accomplishes the same purpose:

Dionysos shatters the positivist perspective, for which there is only one interpretation, one truth, one definite place for everything and everyone. . . . Dionysos [is] the God who introduces us to the world of Otherness. To be able to play many roles we must have this built-in sense of the other. (p. 33)

Such a recognition is deeper and more important than political polemics. The recognition of the Other (whether human or daimonic) is not mere academic sloganeering. Its ultimate result may be the recognition of our own "self" or mask, shapeshifted as it may be.

As many groups have intuited, the sense of community, of communality, is very important to a strengthened sense of personal identity. The other side of this, however, is the almost inexorable manner in which a community hardens from a position of enthusiasm for uniqueness into a dogmatic organization whose *objective* doctrines demand ritual *subjectification*, and the problem of rigidification repeats itself (McLaren, 1986).

It is alone, within the whirlpools of emotion, within the gods and animals—the angels and the demons—of one's own nature that a person, “convuls'd with scarlet pain,” may awaken to the tyranny of ego and to the agony of existence. Hillman (1986) comments:

Confronted with the unbearable in my own nature, I show more trepidation—which is after all the first piece of compassion. In regard to others, my manners alter, my language more attuned and precise, I become more sophisticated and artful. . . . I need something further than community and civilization for they may be too human, too visible. I need imaginal help from tales and images, idols and altars, and the creatures of nature, to help me carry what is so hard to carry personally and alone. Education of sensitivity begins in the backward, culture in chronic disorder. (p. 21)

Such confrontation, it need hardly be said, is no mere matter of introspection or idle fantasy. Imagination must be active, in creative work or in play, for it to memorialize “the invisibles.”

For some, the need to overthrow the tyranny of ego, the monotheism of monotony, involves more pervasive matters than that of opening oneself to the gods. With civilization rapidly moving into hyper-technologization, the

possibility of success in at last eradicating its "chronic discontents"—its marginalized voices and its frustrated pantheons—seems possible. N. O. Brown long ago saw this as the *vital* issue of our times when saying in the introduction to *Life Against Death* (1959), that

it begins to be apparent that mankind, in all its restless striving and progress, has no idea of what it really wants. Freud was right: our real desires are unconscious. It also begins to be apparent that mankind, unconscious of its real desires and therefore unable to obtain satisfaction, is hostile to life and ready to destroy itself. Freud was right in positing a death instinct, and the development of weapons of destruction makes our present dilemma plain: we either come to terms with our unconscious instincts and drives—with life and with death—or else we surely die. (p. x)

Brown understands our fear of the punishing social father as being the great dead hand which weighs us *gravely* down into a death-in-life. It is not old-fashioned religion, according to the early Gnostics and to psychoanalyst Greg Mogenson, to see the spectre of the one God as the ultimate punishing father. Many are those who, fearing that heavy hand, have identified with its power to produce much of the incomprehensible terror and angst of our present predicament. Mogenson (1989) proclaims that it is only through deconstructing the words around our minds that we can save ourselves from the dead weight of time:

This century has enacted a derridean deconstruction of our civilization's logo-centric, Judeo-Christian defense—the Judeo-Christian covenant. In the text of history we can read the subtext of God, the horror of the Great Code. God is the oven. God is the atom bomb. God is a trauma. (p. 50)

These apocalyptic positions which blame the patriarchal allfather for socially subjected consciousness are very uncomfortable to some. If the attack is personalized, it feels like it is focused on a personal father and many of us have or had fine, loving fathers. For me—as a teacher, as a person—to say I feel limited or oppressed because of the great Father God smacks of the Oedipal crisis, but that is simply to continue mythmaking in another arena: the application of Freud's monomyth.

It is the dogma of pedagogy which stifles, the pretense that there is a literal body of knowledge to be passed piecemeal to students. It is as though each teacher is expected to dissect his or her portion of this body and pass it on to the students. Whose body is this? What is the face of institutionalization? Is it Zeus? Is it Yahweh or "God"?

There are voices which think so and which call for the replacement of the patriarchal hierarchy with a matriarchal hierarchy (there can be little doubt it would still be a hierarchy). Paris (1986) points out that any hierarchy derives from a single point of revelation at its peak—a monotheism:

If we can let go of the devotion to an original, single matriarchy of the Great Mother (that ideal which supports monotheistic feminism), then we can regard the plurality of the Goddesses, not as her fragmentation or as her developmental differentiation, but rather as each Goddess comprising an archetypal form of feminism. There are as many feminisms as there are Goddesses, at least. (p. 199)

As I have attempted to indicate, the idea of "teaching" and "teachers" implies there must be "a teaching": a body of knowledge kept slightly out of

reach from which we can feed on only parts at a time. The entire body is out of reach for any one of us; it is just ahead, in the future, eternally deferred.

It seems to me Norman O. Brown (1959, 1966, 1970) is near the mark even at his most bizarre. Brown claims what is just before us is Thanatos: Our will to seek control and security is a denial of growth, creativity, and the dangerous erotic play of life. Unknowingly, we labour for death.

The substance of Thanatos is there before us every day, either drowning us in ads or implied behind the *raison d'être* for seeking an education. Daily, hourly, it is either at the back of our minds or at the front. I speak of the Great God Money. Brown (1959) explains that "money reflects and promotes a style of thinking which is abstract, impersonal, objective, and quantitative, that is to say, the style of thinking of modern science—and what can be more rational than that?" (p. 234) Money is perfectly rational, the epitome of quantification. We look askance at anyone who plays with it. But what is money: shining gold? the sacred? "The ultimate category of economics is power; but power is not an economic category ... to pursue the tracks of power, we will have to enter the domain of the sacred, and map it: all power is essentially sacred power" (p. 251).

But Brown goes on to claim that what we have made sacred is "filthy lucre." The wish to both retain money and use it for purposes of power leads Brown to psychoanalyze that wish as "anal-sadistic" (p. 270). What we hold before us and eat from is the same dung the scarab rolls into a ball and



pushes patiently along, according to Brown. The totality of knowledge, its body, even the ideal society (without discontents) appears in this image as a coffin, or, at least, as an outhouse.

Our civilization, which so many have claimed is overly “heroic” in its myths, is in this view in desperate need of new archetypal adventurers. The archetypal hero is not always male and is certainly not a policeman or a soldier—those action figures that thrive on television. The hero to break from the monomania of money, the monopoly of consciousness, must be a culture-hero indeed. As Hillman indicated earlier, culture looks back and down through memory and its sources, whereas civilization denies the past to pursue its anal-sadistic progress. It is in this sense of culture that teaching may introduce the gods. Teaching becomes mythic whenever it works with memory, imagination, or with “persons.”

I have my doubts that the system is in imminent danger of collapse or that schooling in its entirety promotes only objective rationalists who seek money (and all that it implies) and see all other persons as stepping stones to that goal. But I do feel strongly that teachers who work for *metis*—intuitive knowing—are often the heroes who renew culture by guiding students to renew contact with their original pantheism (Hillman, 1981).

But perhaps the image of the hero has become too tainted with notions of glory and conquest. The teacher I speak of is more like a

hierophant of sacred mysteries, an alchemist of transmutation, or a magus of metamorphosis.

It may be Dionysos who reveals the masks we wear and to which we have become attached, but it is Eros who overleaps Thanatos to bring life (libido) back to our bodies and enliven the world. Here I understand Aphrodite to be the forbidden goddess who has been fearfully excluded from curriculum. She has been pushed to the margins, or left in the chthonic depths of memory. She too often must become pathologized to get the attention she needs. Aphrodite as the principle of love in human relations should be welcomed into any initiate's education (Paris, 1986).

More acceptable, perhaps, at this stage of our evolution is the elusive god, Hermes. Hermes is anything but heroic (López-Pedraza, 1989). He is the god of thieves, the deceiver who breaks all boundaries, and he is the god of writing. When we find ourselves stuck, frozen in the consciousness of the Thanatic money-security god, it is unboundaried Hermes who can free us.

In our paranoia we have transmogrified Aphrodite into Medusa who turns us to stone in the terror of facing her. It is Hermes with his gifts of magical flight, indirect attack—both attributes of the creative imagination—and invisibility—awareness without the delimiting rap of ego—who frees us from this terror of the snake-haired Gorgon, and perhaps allows the Gorgon, like Lamia, to emerge in a more attractive guise.

The Hermetic element in the intolerable image is considerable. . . .  
Hermetic deviousness is given here in the form of flight that is in

someway essential to the meeting with Medusa. It is more than an escape. Likewise the invisibility is so much more than a hero's protective equipment. The psychological significance of this motif lies in the way that Hermes directs us towards Hades through his gift of the cap. This content is a reminder of the long tradition which realises that *the healthy state of psyche is invisible*. (Micklem, 1979, p. 11)

Instead of imagining our physical image as our soul-self, a self-imago like Narcissus, Hermes, as guide, disappears in the depths: "It was no upward soaring to heroic ecstasies, but was essentially in the direction of psyche and therefore a journey that, like, psyche, speaks and defines itself in terms of depths" (Micklem, p. 11). Hermes is not the Pegasus of imaginative inflation, nor is he the courageous hero inflated with dreams of glory. Hermes smiles, shimmers, and disappears. He accepts the "ecstasis of forgetting" (Heidegger, 1927, in Krell, 1990, p. 331, 5n) to stay undefined. As Paris (1990) expostulates:

Too often the reaction against the domination of rationalism and positivism has led to the defense of the simple-minded and ignorant, those who are excluded from the Apollo-Zeus system. But this sells short the Hermes intellect, for he is, along with Dionysos and Aphrodite, an archetype to stand up to the champions of Logos. These champions (the sharpest minds, the strongest wills, the highbrow and the powerful) are more vulnerable to the cleverness and astuteness of Hermes than to what they usually perceive as threat—the uprising of the oppressed. Winning while appearing to lose is a strategy that a hermetic person knows how to play to advantage. The power of humor and ridicule in the face of harsh authority, the role of the court jester, the uses of flight over fight and of artful speech in negotiation—all these can be rediscovered in Hermes . . . . Women, who are said to be wily, know these strategies, as do men who are endowed with that form of intelligence known to the Greeks as *metis*, that is, an intuitive intelligence. . . . Hermes-Mercury is many-faceted, shimmering, impossible to pin down. (p. 61, 62)

Just as imagination cannot be contained by an outsider—be it a teacher or one's own ego—Hermes can never become an identity. He is never where he is expected to be and so, as god of writing, he is the very antithesis of a scribe. He is the messenger-god who brings messages from the archetypal depths below the masks. He is the shapeshifter who can drop into the abyss and step as lightly from it. It is Hermes who suggests that in the process of writing we may allow the world to speak, as is suggested by the metaphor of Muses. By using writing in classes individuals may find themselves on the path of what James Hillman (1983a) calls “soul-making”:

By soul I mean, first of all, a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself. . . . by “soul” I mean the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and *fantasy*—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical. (p. 17)

Writing which is soul-making (providing a perspective outside of the city of anal-sadistic compulsion) is precisely that which is undertaken in autobiography, in dialogue, or in any true fiction. It means the loss of certainty or its seeking.

When I began encountering the Hermes-Mercurius archetype, I finally abandoned the pretense that I knew. Transformation or metamorphosis can only be explored as a possibility when the end result is mysterious and uncertain. Today I no longer accept the Jungian idea of the end result of

individuation as being the discovery of an authentic Self. Hillman's soul as a shifting perspective behind the masks feels more strange, yet more appropriate for a *hermetic* approach. Teaching as a hermetic activity admits to a future of infinite possibility, not one covered with the weight of the body of knowledge, yet one supported by the weight of memory.

Teaching monotheistically leads, so it is said, to a strong sense of identity. To know who you are, you have merely to listen to the socially-injected voices in your head. Teaching polytheistically gives all voices validity but, guided by Hermes, the result need not be cacophony but poetry (in the sense of language speaking itself). Hermetic teaching allows the soul to choose whatever identity (mask) it wishes and to play it into form in a journal, an autobiography, creative dialogue, or some form of fictional characterization or creative exploration. The imagination can never be capped by a singular identity, as Derrida (1981) has noted of Thoth, the Egyptian Hermes:

the figure of Thoth takes shape and takes its shape from the very thing it resists and substitutes for. But it thereby opposes *itself*, passes into its other, and this messenger-god is truly a god of the absolute passage between opposites. If he had any identity—but he is precisely the god of nonidentity—he would be that *coincidentia oppositorum*. . . . In distinguishing himself from the his opposite, Thoth also imitates it, becomes its sign and representative, obeys it and *conforms* to it, replaces it, by violence if need be. He is thus the father's other, the father, and the subversive movement of replacement. The god of writing is thus at once his father, his son, and himself. He cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences. Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of *joker*, a floating signifier, a wild card, one who puts play into play. (p. 99)

I have found this “non-identity” to be the most important component of the autobiography section of my own courses in the present. Jo Anne Pagano (1991) has rightly pointed out that one of the major dangers in classroom autobiography is precisely that hardening of self-pretense:

Autobiographical writing, particularly in the classroom context, can inhibit that surprise because we are so concerned with the representation of ourselves. When we tell stories with ourselves prominently and self-consciously at the center, we tend to think of others only in relation to ourselves; we tend to reify others. The exclusive preoccupation with our own concerns and motivations annexes the otherness of the other. (p. 202)

I try to teach in a way which avoids this unpleasant side-effect, yet I must beware of providing too many guidelines and ordering the students to investigate their past as they would a stranger's. I, too, must take chances. I, too, must undergo the “scarlet pain” of shapeshifting. I often make mistakes and it often does not work, but I still feel I am working out my own mythic journey and, at the very least, encouraging my students to enter on theirs. It is not a path a student, or any person, may simply enter on to walk out of the city, to cross the threshold of adventure. It involves transmutation, becoming aware that the thing called “I” is just another mask (and one largely created by others). This inner change is often not detectable or testable, but many serious educators consider it the true task of education. As Donald Cowan, President of the University of Dallas (1986), has written:

Learning must cause a metamorphosis of the person, not merely elevate him—must make him into something different from what he was before. The evidence for this comes in the moment of making.

There must issue from the learner something new, something he has not been taught, that has about it a recognizability of authenticity. (p. 27)

So this is where I find myself today: a stranger in a strange land. But this land is also a mindscape and perhaps even a soul formation spiralling above the abyss. And the stranger is I, the writer, estranged from other soulmasks who may face me as gods or plague me as demons. I perceive the images and hear the whispers which arise in reverie from hidden depths within or hidden depths without. In this way, I participate with these soulmaking forces, not as a heroic conquistador, but more as a transparent mask whose features can adapt and give expression to the daimonic presence behind it. I become as mutable as the gods within, my motions and emotions transfigured and multiplied. Perhaps I continue to engage in egoistic self-delusion, but fantasy is the stuff of the gods.

In a way, I feel I have become unreal, yet simultaneously been caught in the maelstrom of more eternal presences which have swirled up from the abyss and out from their hiding places in the natural world. I am involved in the immanence I felt as a child in the sandhills and I again feel the ominous/wondrous sense of something about to happen. I am deeply aware of my transience and this gives life a certain piquancy, yet it does not lessen the sense of other presences moving between the concepts, and back and forth through the gates of the city of insecurity.

This sense of unrealized forces behind our existence was beautifully expressed by the late naturalist, Loren Eiseley (1987), in a poem which proved to be one of his final writings. Though it recognizes no gods, the poet's aching awareness of the tenuousness of self leaves the reader with an overwhelming sense of silent worlds in eternal motion. This part of the poem concerns Eiseley's awakening after passing out cold at the top of his stairs:

## ***"I Am the Stranger Here"***

*I have often wondered since, knowing full well I died,  
how the dark and scattered cells in the sprawled body knew  
how the rent in the brain might be closed,  
how the churning blood might stop  
the wind, the intolerable wind that swept  
me down to the dark, how, out of nothingness,  
could rise, could be rebuilt  
the tower of light in the mind, how steadily crawling cells  
could recompose and knit  
memory to memory, till up from death I came,  
drawn forth by things unseen, some entity, some toiling  
congregation*

*below me in the dark, but not myself nor my will.*

*No, not myself. In all the years remaining  
I know, and am grateful to them, those secret alchemists  
of void and stardust who, when my will had failed,  
relit the light. Why did they do it? No one has answered me, none.*

*The blood does not speak, nor the stricken neurons answer,  
yet they willed that light should be and it was done.  
I am the stranger here, the construct. I am the lonely one.*

(p. 244)



### **Chapter 3: Memory and Matter**

*"memory ... is just the intersection of mind and matter."*  
(Henri Bergson, Matter and Memory, p. xii)

**§Mind and Matter.** Now that I have remembered my teaching career and sought the mythic themes which seem to have been so interwoven with my life, I have to ask myself: Just what is it I have remembered here? Over the basically twenty years from which I have rendered a narrative, there were other incidents beyond count which must have had lasting effects. There were vital relationships which were left unexplored and important places which even now hold memories against time's erosion. Most important, as far as the quest for memory goes, is why did I choose the particular lines of summary I did? With all the endless bits of memorial data available, why did I choose to compose the particular fugues I did?

It may be my narrative was emplotted unconsciously to be appropriate for my particular self-schema (Piaget & Inhelder, 1973; Ross, 1992) or that my habitus (Grinnell, 1973; Kirby, 1991) chose only those storylines which would present me to myself in the best light. If either of these is the case, then the self, however defined, chooses its memories and its role is more that of a censor than a judge of truth. It seems the self acts more as a public

relations officer than a chief executive, according to Jeremy Campbell (1989), regarding truth and control as being secondary to public image.

But then what does this say of memory, that it is a sort of grab-bag full of sensory or emotional impressions, some less than accurately recorded? Then when the self puts these memories into a narrative all that must be left is the "truthfulness" (Pinar, p. 25) of the narrator's approach and that is subject to the self-deceptions of the habitus or self-schema. The self is assumed to originate in intersubjective mimicry (Lasch, 1984) and identification (Freud), especially of parental figures, until it, at last, becomes an object to itself in Lacan's (1977) mirror stage and begins to protect that image through the manipulation of memory.

This, however, tells us little. It may be understood as being subject to the paradigm of infinite regression. After all, where did the parents get their identities from, and their parents before them? How time and place oriented is the habitus of self and how culturally designed are the schemata of self? At some point, within what Casey (1987b) calls primary memory, memory must be remembering itself. That is, if memory serves the function of a grab-bag for self-image, it must also serve the function of remembering who the self is. It must always already be active in every act of recollection. Remembering into the self rather than "before" it—remembering subjectively rather than objectively—takes one into the very structures of linguistics and

culture which first created the space for subjectivity in the first place (Ricoeur, 1984).

This speaks of both the nebulous nature of that which we call memory and of its abyssal depths. Did memory originate with language or with technology or with mourning? The question of origins, itself, is probably another instance of the paradigm of infinite regression (Daignault & Gauthier, 1981), but as Casey (1987b, 1991) indicated in chapter 1, body-memory must underlie each of the above cases of mental memory: "Because it re-enacts the past, it need not represent it; its own kinesthesias link it from within to the felt movements which it is reinstating; as a way of 'dilating our being in the world,' body memory includes its own past by an internal osmotic intertwining with it" (1987b, p. 178). Such body memory must be present in the rest of the organic kingdom, as well, which makes memory an attribute of nature. Indeed, that is Casey's project: returning memory to the world. But what is this "world"? Does it include what we commonly refer to as "dead matter"? Can it even be known outside of our cultural constructions?

That our cultural world has had an effect, an enormous effect, on nature few would deny. Has nature had an effect on us? We were all taught in school how cultural evolution has "replaced" natural evolution in our species. We know today that we had ancestors who may have been Hominidae, like us, but who had neither the brain capacity nor the larynx necessary for speech, and "language is so intimately linked to man and

society that they are inseparable" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 3). Did *Homo symbolicus* (Jung, 1971) create culture in the "æther" of imaginative space only then to turn on nature? Or did the symbol-making hominid merely act on natural impulses to remember the past and adapt to the future? Or, perhaps, the question is without meaning since our ideas of the inner lives of our primate ancestors and of nature, herself, can only be cultural interpretations.

Memory, as *memor* (mindfulness), is described by Dunne (1988) in chapter 5 as arising around mourning, an understanding shared with the psychoanalyst Kristeva (1987) and perhaps with Lacan (1977). A more widespread anthropological storyline is that as *Homo erectus* became *Homo habilis*—as the upright hominid used his freed hands and opposing thumb to become the tool-making hominid—tools created mind (Portmann, 1954/64; Leakey, 1982): Memory as *techne* (skill or art) evolved as the technical assistant to the hands in their endeavour to produce and reproduce stronger and finer tools.

In the latter case, language and memory can be understood as developing within a rapidly enlarging brain and functioning constructively to further the basic survival instincts of their animal hosts. Memory, in this case, is a brain function like language which has expanded simultaneously with humankind's technological mastery. Technology, in this light, is not the result of mental activity but is instead its manifest identity. Creativity is technical creativity, present in nature and in matter.

Kristeva (1989) states that the archeologists, Böklen and Leroi-Gourhan, share the opinion that language appeared with the graphic symbols on statuettes and eventually in caves during the Mousterian period and that “there is human language wherever there are graphic symbols” (p. 45). This would be an explicit case where “Anthropian” motor functions led into a new world of symbolism, from which memory emerged and evolved, gradually, the symbols into language.

The former case—*memor*— may have had a spontaneous appearance more to do with shamanism, with rhythm and movement, than with the referential symbolism of language (Eliade, 1964). *Memor* grew from the nostalgia for pure action: “*Except for the point, the still point, / There would be no dance, and there is only the dance*” (Eliot, 1944, 1, 66, 67). Only with the evolution of mythic names and narratives, in this view, did *memor* appropriate linguistic sounds and use them non-representationally as invocation of the ancestors or gods and as sacred song to augment the action of ritual (Harrison, 1903/91). Lévi-Strauss (1966) has noted how the structure of language resembles that of music.

Here, instead of memory being a dependent “technical assistant,” it becomes its own creative matrix. By recoiling upon itself, it compresses the density of its own remembering “(which *does not* re-member)” (Taylor, p. 168). Dream and imagination produce images as memory turns upon itself: “*Poetic images condense infinite meanings in elliptic associations,*” as

Bachelard (1987, p. 28) says. Bachelard was fond of the image of the tree, and he indicated the recoil of memory as being similar to the invasion of dreams which awaken us to our roots: "A root is always a discovery. We dream it more than we see it. It surprises us when we discover it" (p. 84). The way of the dreamer, the artist of the soul, is a reversal of the outgrowing use of self toward environmental expansion:

The root is the mysterious tree, it is the subterranean, inverted tree. For the root, the darkest earth—like the pond, but without the pond—is also a mirror, a strange opaque mirror which doubles every aerial reality with a subterranean image. (pp. 84,85)

It seems that self as *techne*, with its practically-oriented memories, can easily be explained away as residing in the space of the human brain or hands or the constructions of those hands. However, where can we find the space of those strange dreams and reveries which draw us back among the roots of the "inverted tree"? The self which enters the labyrinth of itself, through "possession" or bold endeavour, seems to have other intentions than increasing one's "substance." Can it be dismissed as instinctive brain activity to "lose oneself" in ruminescences, or to actively draw or write to enter the labyrinth of soul?

Bergson (1912) insisted that "memory ... is just the intersection of mind and matter" (p. xii). He understood the body to be an instrument of action, and "of action only. In no degree, in no sense, under no aspect, does it serve to prepare, far less to explain, a representation" (p. 299). How he applied these notions will be explained in the next section, but here it should be

noted that memory, which consists of representations, is not understood as merely an extension of perceptions which came into being gradually over time, but a creative leap which he refers to as "spirit": "When we pass from pure perception to memory, we definitely abandon matter for spirit" (p. 301).

Bergson seems to be indicating the hidden connection between human memory and language. For him, the representation is the beginning of language—a creative leap that could not have emerged gradually from the signs and sounds of proto-human tool-users.

Linguistics as a science refuses to even consider the question of origins. Kristeva (1989) sums this up by saying:

No matter how interesting all this information is, it reveals only the process by which an *already constituted* language is *learned* by subjects in a given society, and can inform us only about the psychosociological particularities of the subjects speaking or learning a particular language. But it can shed no light on the historical process of the formation of language, and even less on its "origin." (p. 44)

Kristeva even questions the gradualist hypothesis:

Can one consider that language underwent a period of development, of slow and laborious progression during the course of which it became the complex system of signification and communication that it is today, and that history finds as far back as it goes into the past? Or should one admit ... that from the "beginning" language was "formally complete" and that once there was man there was language as a complete system in charge of all the functions it has today. (p. 46)

Kristeva cites Lévi-Strauss in his renunciation of the search for a sociological theory to explain symbolism, instead suggesting a search for the symbolic origin of society. As language functions mainly through

unconscious exchange, so social systems could have appeared as representations of language. Kristeva quotes Lévi-Strauss as writing that,

no matter what the moment and the circumstances of its appearance in the animal scale were, language could only have been born in a single stroke. Objects couldn't just start to signify progressively. After a transformation ..., a passage was effected from a stage where nothing made sense to another where everything did. (p. 46)

In this perspective, the world suddenly revealed itself in symbols which were felt as material presences (a perspective I will pursue in chapter 4, on mythical consciousness), but the appearance of this *signification* was different from "the slow acquisition of the knowledge that 'this signifies'" (p. 46). This latter function is the beginning of the division which led to subjectivity: to identity, and to personal memory. It is only with some semblance of personal identity that memory as *memor* can begin.

Perhaps here, again, the dichotomy is being too finely drawn. The situation may be more *both/and* than *either/or*. Michel Foucault (1988) considers the technology of the self to be the *action* of the soul which may either increase substance or "care" for its invisible source:

The self is not clothing, tools, or possessions. It is to be found in the principle which uses these tools, a principle not of the body but of the soul. You have to worry about your soul—that is the principal activity of caring for yourself. The care of the self is the care of the activity and not the care of the soul-as-substance. (p. 25)

Yet, even if the principle of self and memory is the same in both instances—that of natural, substantial concerns, and that of seemingly insubstantial explorations—the difference is enough to give one pause. If the



body seeks only to increase its substance, then why would the brain be programmed to remember, imagine, or dream? Is it merely the response to the growing awareness of “this signifies” or is it the regression back into the world in which signifier and signified were once united? If such remembering is the recoil of “care” upon the activity of the self, as Foucault indicates, then such explorations may be regarded as contra-nature. If this is conceivable, I submit that the inspiration for such mindfulness may not lie within the solidity of the brain. Such inspiration may not lie within matter, as we commonly understand it. But, lest it seem I am proposing a sort of spiritualism or alternate reality, the problem may lie in the traditional understanding of physical matter—and in its intimacy with time.

Before I use the minds of Bergson and Whitehead, and the startling implications of “postmodern science,” to seek a source in time for the creative recoil of memory upon itself, allow me to further explore the phenomenon of memory as *techne* in time and matter.

If mind and matter are distinct phenomena, then memory exists only in the former and there is no question to explore. If, however, mind and matter are of the same substance—or at least mutually implicated—then the question must be asked just where is the place of memory in matter, or, better, what is the action of memory in matter?

This is not to delve into the specifics of the mind-body problem, a subject thoroughly explored by neurologists, psychologists, and

philosophers of various eras and schools who have yet to come to a decisive conclusion. Body memory, especially as elucidated by Merleau-Ponty (1945/78) and Casey (1987b), was adumbrated in chapter 1 and it is likely this is akin to the perceptually-oriented memory imputed to non-human animals. Like animals, we, too, employ body memory to navigate through familiar terrain and notice it most when something physically familiar has changed in some way: "Body memory alludes to memory that is intrinsic to the body, to its own ways of remembering: how we remember in and through and by the body" (Casey, 1987b, p. 147).

It is difficult to see how even the most hermeneutical of phenomenologists could deny a place within memory and self to the vexations, "humours," and genetic programming of each of the bodies we are, though just what that place is remains open to cultural interpretation. As our bodies are genetically similar to all those of our species, it is conceivable that there could be species-specific memories which reflect traumatic experiences or habituated responses common to us all. On a further level entirely, since we have evolved from less complex forms of life and remain so connected, atavistic body-memory buried deep in our genes could exceed the lifespan of the changing cells of this body and derive from some primordial cellular struggle for life. Even single-celled amoebae appear to be capable of remembering and learning (Eiseley, 1960), so remembering and learning (for specific ends) themselves may be inherited characteristics.

Neurologists will insist that the mind is merely an "effect" of the body. As neurons fire through synapse loops, the body experiences consciousness with the attendant illusion of free-will. The body, it is concluded, is merely responding instinctively to its environment and is pre-programmed to act in certain ways to ensure its survival and reproduction. As D. E. Wooldridge writes under his apt title, *The Machinery of the Brain* (1963):

No useful purpose has yet been established for the sense of awareness that illumines a small fraction of the mental activities of a few species of higher animals. It is not clear that the behavior of any individual or the course of world history would have been affected in any way if awareness were nonexistent. (In Griffin, 1988, p. 42)

It is, of course, such mechanizing of our inner experience which led from Pavlov to Watson, Skinner and the behavioral psychologists. Even if we were someday forced to accept a purely physiological cause and effect relationship between the brain and consciousness, however, it is still unlikely that human personality could be reduced to generic behaviors. This was known even in 1931, when Sir Arthur Keith, the British anatomist, wrote:

Within the brain, there are some eighteen thousand million of microscopic living units or nerve cells. These units are grouped in myriads of battalions, and the battalions are linked together by a system of communication which in complexity has no parallel in any telephone network devised by man. Of the millions of nerve units in the brain not one is isolated. All are connected and take part in handling the ceaseless streams of messages which flow into the brain from eyes, ears, fingers, feet, limbs, and body.

If nature cannot reproduce the same simple pattern in any two fingers, how much more impossible is it for her to reproduce the same pattern in any two brains, the organization of which is so inconceivably complex! Every child is born with a certain balance of faculties, aptitudes, inclinations, and instinctive leanings. In no two is the

balance alike, and each different brain has to deal with a different tide of experience. I marvel, then, not that one man should disagree with another concerning the ultimate realities of life, but that so many, in spite of the diversity of their inborn natures, should reach so large a measure of agreement. (In Campbell, 1968, pp. 32, 33)

Though physiological uniqueness is affirmed, the necessity of consciousness is not. Sir Arthur understands that reality flows “into the brain” and the self—essentially passive—is apparently waiting there to receive it. The perceived world is out there—solid, reliable, consistent—and the brain must have generic sensory mechanisms after all which receive the impulses of colour, sound, or what have you in identical ways. Mind, though unique, is still implied as a by-product of the brain. The world is conceived as spatially solid, undergoing only the slow transformations of time. Memory is a storage unit of the brain where bygone sensory impulses reside in retirement, but implacable matter, itself, contains none.

That the body takes part in remembering few would deny. As memory is dependent on a healthy brain physiology, so is the constitution of identity, as has been clearly made evident in reporting on brain damaged patients by Luria (1968, 1972) and Sacks (1985, 1987). These physicians, however, believe that the brain alone does constitute the human in human life. Sacks has written that for Luria “even the most elemental functions of brain and mind were not wholly biological in nature but conditioned by the experiences, the interactions, the culture, of the individual—[Luria believed] that human faculties could not be studied or understood in isolation, but

always had to be understood in relation to living and formative influences”

(1987, p. *viii*). Sacks, at least, even goes so far as to accept

the lesson also taught by Socrates, Freud, Proust—that a life, a human life, is not a life until it is examined; that it is not a life until it is truly remembered and appropriated; and that such a remembrance is not something passive, but active, the active and creative construction of one’s life, the finding and telling of the true story of one’s life. (p. *xviii*)

Though it is not clear where Sacks considers the “active and creative” storytelling source to lie, it does seem clear he means it to be somehow beyond brain physiology. Despite his training in physiology, he seems to feel that remembering creatively undertaken becomes a self which is not settled and final but in as much creative process as the remembering which leads into its becoming. The self’s ongoing story *is* the self.

This, of course, is how memory is experienced: either freely undertaken or its flashes freely pursued. The phenomenological study of memory intends to be interested only in this subjective side: memory (and self) as you and I intimately experience it with the assumption, apparently, that neuronic impulses and chemical changes in the brain are merely manifestations of our experience. Simultaneously, however, we continue to experience perceptions as objectively real (even though some of us may be somewhat colour-blind or have more finely tuned senses of smell, etc.). If sense perceptions are “impressions” of the real, then memory is nothing more than the passive retaining of those impressions.

Aristotle (Sorabji, 1972) certainly saw it this way,<sup>1</sup> but he was opposing the thought of his master, Plato, who maintained that sense perceptions are but pale shadows of the realm of pure ideas or pure forms. With right knowledge, according to Plato (1961), one can see through the mere sensible world to this *intelligible* world. Knowledge, in essence, is *anamnesis*: an undoing of amnesia, a remembering of these pure forms or ideas as they eternally exist in a realm of light and bliss (Cornford, 1948).

Long before Plato's time, in the pre-Buddhistic East, this sort of denial of the reality of the sensory world had emerged into the sacred consciousnesses of at least Daoist China, Vedic India, and Bön Tibet. The proud science of our West has long ignored the accumulated wisdom of such areas because they have neither the technological progress nor the material prosperity to "prove" their assertions. Experience cannot be measured. Now, however, the revolution in the sciences has confirmed many of the "idealistic" assumptions of these areas. Heisenberg (1971) could have quoted from the secret doctrines of Tibetan yoga for his uncertainty principle: "All things have no existence apart from the mind which holdeth them to be existing" (Evans-Wentz, 1935/58, p. 141). Compare Plotinus (3rd century A.C.E.): "In the same way [the soul] makes objects of sense which are, so to speak, connected with it, shine out, one might say, by its own power, and

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle does affirm that matter must be conceived as a locus of determinate potentialities that must become actualized only through the *activity* of forms (Sorabji, 1972).

brings them before its eyes, since its power of [sense perception] is ready for them and, in a way, in travail *towards* them" (1984, IV:6, p. 329). (my italics)

Was Plato a *yogin*? There is no evidence for such assertions but the origin of such visions as the "world of ideas" may help to discover the place ascribed to mind, especially as it relates to matter. Plato's idealism was not as original as is often thought, deriving as it does from Pythagoras<sup>1</sup> by way of Parmenides (Dodds, 1973). Parmenides and other pre-Socratic rationalists developed their speculations within the "irrational" geography that myth and ritual had already mapped out (Cornford, 1952/71; Dodds, 1953/73). The mythic mind's experience of profane and sacred times may prefigure the chronicity of *becoming* as against timeless *Being* in Parmenides, and the world of appearances and the world of ideas in Plato.

Plato, perhaps, was such a powerful influence due to his tenacity and because he wrote in expressive dramatic dialogues rather dry treatises or oracular pronouncements. Possibly read widely and enjoyed, people embraced Plato's transcendentalism. His idealism became the philosophical foundation of the new Christian doctrine of the later Roman Empire, and the senses and matter were relegated to fallen creation for at least the next 1000 years.

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<sup>1</sup>Pythagoras may have travelled in Asia where he absorbed ideas from the cultural locus mentioned above. Pythagoreans believed in the purification and the transmigration of the soul (Dodds, 1953/73).

In this view, matter is dead and of no interest or worth in itself. Mind, on the other hand, through anamnesis in Platonism and through revelation and obedience in Christianity, had the power to become aware of the one, true reality. But with the Renaissance and the inexorable advance of science into the mysteries of the material world, the stage was set for the opposition of idealism and materialism, which is still echoed in the so-called mind-body problem: Is memory *in* matter, or is it *in* some sort of ethereal space?

**§The *Illud Tempus*.** What is interesting about the space of memory is how the question of time seems to have been side-stepped, except among the early mythmakers of the cosmic round. In profane time, individual memories accumulate creating a sense of a "self-seeking self" and so is accompanied by guilt, according to Eliade (1959):

Time had worn the human being, society, the cosmos—and this destructive time was profane time, duration strictly speaking; it had to be abolished in order to reintegrate the mythical moment in which the world had come into existence, bathed in a "pure," "strong," and sacred time. . . . The meaning of this periodical retrogression of the world into a chaotic modality was this: all the "sins" of the year, everything that time had soiled and worn, was annihilated in the physical sense of the word. By symbolically participating in the annihilation and re-creation man too was created anew. . . . He had reintegrated the fabulous time of Creation, hence a sacred and strong time—sacred because transfigured by the presence of the gods, strong because it was the time that belonged, and belonged only, to the most gigantic creation ever accomplished, that of the universe. (pp. 78, 79)

In this view, just as daily time is profane so are daily memories, the comforting walls of the habitus. Any person "by participating ritually in the



end of the world and in its re-creation ... became contemporary with the *illud tempus*; hence he was born anew, he began life over again with his reserve of vital forces *intact*, as it was at the moment of his birth" (p. 80). In Eliade's exposition of the annihilation of profane time for the earlier *illud tempus*, or time of origins, it must be asked what the memories were of those who walked among the gods. Could they not imagine a time before? Eliade indicates that the memories *renewed* were those of the sacred stories which signalled the beginning of all being and time:

The sacred time ... is a *mythical time*, that is, a primordial time, not to be found in the historical past, an *original time*, in the sense that it came into existence all at once, that it was not preceded by another time, because no time could exist *before the appearance of the reality narrated in myth*. (1959, p. 72)

Memory as *techne*—mind as technical accompaniment to the hands—may well have employed language-forms, perhaps much as non-human animals have sound-codes and signals for information sharing, called *zoosemiotics* by Kristeva (1989, pp. 318-323). Since the genetic material of all (known) organisms is based on the nucleic acids DNA and RNA, the genetic code may be considered universal so some observers, according to Kristeva, have concluded "that biological as well as cultural phenomena can be envisaged as aspects of the information process" (p. 322). Kristeva indicates that such universalizing reductionism implies a transcendental meaning—an idealism—in material life:

Certain scholars remain convinced that the combined effort of genetics, information theory, linguistics, and semiotics can contribute

to an understanding of "semiosis," which ... can be considered the definition of life. Here we are faced with a phenomenological postulate that is given as empirically demonstrated: the order of *language* unites that of *life* and *ideality*. The element of signification, the substance of expression that makes up speech reunites in a parallelism (transcendental) *meaning* and *life*. (p. 323)

This imputation of a meaning-making function to the language of information codes also implies an inherent meaning in the memory codes constructed in the *techne* mode—perhaps akin to what Eliade has called above profane time. It seems to me, however, that we do not experience meaning in the daily memory of unfolding time (no matter how genetically universal we may be). To experience meaning, we must participate in an *infolding* against profane time, against memory as information, and experience the beginning of time with "*the appearance of the reality narrated in myth*," according to Eliade.

Memory as *memor* begins with myth. Narratives and ritual create meaning—create reality—through a reënactment of "the beginning of time" as known through archetypal memory: the creative recoil of memory upon itself (chapters 4, 5). Archetypal memory may create meanings, but it does not assume them (Perlman, 1988). The mythic imagination has the same limitations as does the empirical world of the senses, but *it seeks to remember beyond the information gathering of the private self*. In the archaic world, of course, there were specialists of the sacred (Eliade, 1964) who did the remembering for the group and led them in reënactments and narratives of the *illud tempus*. The result seems to have been the same for all, however:

Profane time and profane identity were abolished and everyone “began life over again with his reserve of vital forces *intact*.” The habitus was baptized.

Memory may well be flashback images, discrete sensations, and the narrative interpretations I have been displaying through autobiography in chapter 2 and will be evoking in chapter 5. Furthermore, such narrative seems to have no other possible derivation than the semiotic world—“the text of everyday life” (Richardson, 1989). Even the images and sensations that seem to leave us on the verge of a narrative-shaped memory would likely receive scant attention were it not for the socially-constructed subjectivity which takes note of such things. When memory and imagination meet—and they must—a mythic memory seems to result.

The question remains whether or not such mythic memory—the projection forward of repetition from the past—is part of “nature's plan” as genetic code or material evolution of some sort. I will indicate the dynamic role of mythic narrative in creating (or re-creating) the future, but its place in the unfolding of time has not been explored. To do so, I will look at two modern philosophers of time, Bergson and Whitehead, who seemed to develop a vision of reality which gave an important place to memory and the creative imagination.

**Idealism, Realism, Bergson.** After Plato and Plotinus, the Christian philosophers held out for a kind of idealism which granted God the only

reality. The crossover seems to have come from Berkeley who led the way back into a kind of modern Neo-Platonism in which the mind has some sort of priority over physical reality. This position was supported from the differing perspectives of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Hegel.

The realists, who believe in the material reality of what the senses perceive, had supporters among the Greeks, but the modern anti-idealist position was especially laid out by G. E. Moore who states that objects have an existence independent of our knowing of them and exist basically as they appear to us. Dewey is sometimes classed among the realists in that he claimed only nature—that which is studied by the natural sciences—exists. (summarized in De George, 1962) As a philosopher of “becoming,” however, Dewey is difficult to conceive in the realist camp.

Henri Bergson has found himself occasionally placed in the idealist camp, or classified as an “intuitionist” (Runes, 1961), yet he saw himself as providing the link between the two positions, as science itself was beginning to do. Instead of putting the “real” in the “ideal” or nature in the mind, in *Matter and Memory* (1912), Bergson suggested the necessity of postulating some sort of memory within both animate and inanimate nature—one of the many suggestions A. N. Whitehead was to take up. Human memory, then, is but the expansion of this natural impulse to lead to the separation of mind from matter. Later, however, in *Creative Evolution* (1911/83), Bergson began

to see more of a creative power at work in the world, which includes both matter and memory, and may have its expression in language:

Bergsonian intuition is a concentrated attention, an increasingly difficult attempt to penetrate deeper into the singularity of things. Of course, to communicate, intuition must have recourse to language. . . . This it does with infinite patience and circumspection, at the same time accumulating images and comparisons in order to 'embrace reality,' thus suggesting in an increasingly precise way what cannot be communicated by means of general terms and abstract ideas (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, p. 91).

Attempting to deny both idealism and realism, Bergson reasoned that matter is an "aggregate of 'images.' And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*" (1912, p. vii). Each traditional position, then, depends upon the perspective taken. If memory remains only perceptual memory, he writes in *Matter and Memory* (1912), then we may be helped to make our next decision:

But this is not all. By allowing us to grasp in a single intuition multiple moments of duration, it frees us from the movement of the flow of things, that is to say, from the rhythm of necessity. The more of these moments memory can contract into one, the firmer is the hold which it gives to us on matter: so that the memory of a living being appears indeed to measure, above all, its powers of action upon things, and to be only the intellectual reverberation of this power. (p. 303)

This sounds very much like Bergson is suggesting that pure memory has access to what he calls different planes of consciousness, or, sometimes, pure spirit. Pure memory, he indicates is a pure potential for action to create the next creative field of order science can then discover.

The historical "quarrel" between the idealists and the realists has its origin, according to Bergson (1911/83), in the mind's attempt to respond to disorder. Bergson writes that "if the great problem is to know why and how reality submits itself to an order, it is because the absence of every kind of order appears possible or conceivable." He continues:

It is this absence of order that realists and idealists alike believe they are thinking of—the realist when he speaks of the regularity that "objective" laws actually impose on a virtual disorder of nature, the idealist when he supposes a "sensuous manifold" which is coordinated (and consequently itself without order) under the organizing influence of our understanding. (p. 220)

Bergson, on the contrary, wrote extensively about the synchronic creativity between what had been called idealism and realism—or mind and matter—both of which are the results of intelligence acting on instinct:

In order to follow the indications of instinct, there is no need to perceive *objects*, it is enough to distinguish *properties*. Intelligence, on the contrary, even in its humblest form, already aims at getting matter to act on matter. (p. 189)

The world, that is to say, does not come to exist with its objects, i.e., objectively, until the "intelligence" perceives it as such. Simultaneously, the intelligence gives itself mental form through the conceptualization of its actions:

Thus the same movement by which the mind is brought to form itself into intellect, that is to say, into distinct concepts, brings matter to break itself up into objects excluding one another. *The more consciousness is intellectualized, the more matter is spatialized.* (p. 189)

And, it should be added for my purposes here, the more time is temporalized. The intellect, deriving from memory as *techne*, “instinctively selects in a given situation whatever is like something already known” (p. 29). So, as matter is perceived as distinct objects and the mind as distinct perceptions and conceptions, time is perceived as distinct present moments. According to Bergson, this is the result of the way past perceptions—factual memories—are “held” then further anticipated: “Of the future, only that is foreseen which is like the past or can be made up again with elements like those of the past” (p. 28). But the real is not in the fiction of present solidity, it is instead being created as we move into it: “Time is invention or it is nothing at all” (p. 341).

Bergson never develops a complete system or cosmology or states imperatives, but he does indicate that if we wish to find the real, to participate in the ongoing emergence of creation, we must cease projecting a future from a “present” which seems to exist only because we are always in the process of remembering it:

We should no longer be asking where a moving body will be, what shape a system will take, through what state a change will pass at a given moment: the moments of time, which are only arrests of our attention, would no longer exist; it is the flow of time, it is the very flux of the real that we should be trying to follow. (p. 342)

This leads into Bergson’s famous concept of “duration,” an idea variously interpreted. It seems to be related to what German phenomenologists call the *Lebenswelt* or the previously mentioned (chap. 1)

*habitus*, and perhaps to the causal efficacy at work during Whitehead's *actual events* or *occasions* (1978). It refers to time as the *becoming* of a reality which is never become, though the intellect perceives it so. The rational intellect is an important survival mechanism which evolution has made manifest, Bergson says, but it seems only able to carry us along into a future we have determined shall be as identical as possible with the past. If there is no *real* present, an interesting implication is that we have created our sense of the present with the immediate memories of the past, *but the only creative position is always the slightly extended futurity of becoming*. The "present" may be said to be created from the duration already moving into the future—with the materials of the past. From which "present" we project the "future," and so on. . .

We cannot perceive beyond our senses which are limited by our intellect's "use" of memory to perceive. And we cannot creatively *act* with intellect alone, which works only within the flow of time:

For, as soon as we are confronted with true duration, we see that it means creation, and that if that which is being unmade endures, it can only be because it is inseparably bound to what is making itself. Thus will appear the necessity of a continual growth of the universe, I should say of a life of the real. And thus will be seen in a new light the life which we find on the surface of our planet, a life directed the same way as that of the universe, and inverse of materiality. To intellect, in short, there will be added intuition. (p. 343)

It is intuition, according to Bergson, which guides us into "true duration," and a union with the power of creativity found there—the immediacy of *élan vital*. I would like to note how similar in structure this



suggestion is to rituals previously described by Eliade as a return to the *illud tempus*, the time of creation. Bergson's position seems to be that an intuitional memory can seek the symbols beyond the perceived circle of self—the habitus—in what has been called the mythopoeic imagination.<sup>1</sup>

In what fashion can we imagine time unfolding or our infolding into time? I look about me and I hear my air conditioner crank out pollutants, I look beside my Mac Classic and see Sonya, my overweight grey cat, sleep on Stephen Ray Gould's *Time's arrow*, *Time's Cycle*, and I feel the weary solidity of the self relentlessly tapping away at these keys. How can duration be conceived as happening amidst these realistic events? Alfred North Whitehead is often considered to have taken Bergson's suggestions about time and memory and to have completed them in a systematic fashion. I ask myself: What is the place of memory in Whitehead's work? Has he a place for the mythopoeic imagination in his intricate cosmology?

**§Becoming as Process: A. N. Whitehead.** My initial response to the latter question would be to simply reply in the affirmative. Since any human construction of a cosmology cannot ultimately be verified experimentally and since, by definition, any human is *within* its own ideas of a cosmos, a cosmology is a work of speculative philosophy, which Whitehead has

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<sup>1</sup>Like Foucault's "care of the self" being an advanced form of the "technology of the self," Bergson's "intuition" is not a denial of intellect, but a completion of it.

extensively defined. Speculative philosophy in our rationalizing world is related to the mythopoeic imagination. A cosmology is, itself, a work of imagination which endeavours to divest itself of the cosmetics of imagery, drama, and allusion to specific culture-heroes or divinities (Whitehead, 1978).

This is insufficient, however, so I will proceed to dissect the terms of the question. Following this, I will attempt a brief outline of Whitehead's cosmology, as "ultimate" then as "immediate," especially as portrayed in *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (1978) realizing that this statement and my limitations could not possibly do Whitehead's "magnum opus" its deserved justice. I shall then speculate whether or not Whitehead intended the mythopoeic imagination to have a background or central place in his cosmic scheme, or if such place can be found.

**§Cosmos and Imagination.** The idea of cosmos will not detain me long. It is such a big idea that it seems to me unnecessary to attempt to *grasp* it whole. To most of us, cosmos is a synonym for universe: an incomprehensible totality consisting mainly of vast emptiness. Our incomprehension must only increase when we learn through someone such as Carl Sagan in his TV miniseries "Cosmos" that this universe is replete with mathematical anomalies and warps in space-time, such as those encountered when approaching the event horizons of black holes. The black

holes, themselves, theoretically deny the totality of everything by being, as far as we can understand, cosmic drainpipes to nothingness. Some even propose that black-holes are inverse doorways to "other" universes or other planes of being (Toben & Wolf, 1982). One need hardly throw in speculations about universes beginning and ending or expanding then contracting to give a sense of the utter chaos around our dreams of order.

The archetypal mythologist, James Hillman, attempts to bring us back to the original meaning of the word *cosmos* and to reveal that it refers specifically to "dreams of order" within the image of a particular Greek deity: "Everything had shelter and altar. Nothing was lost; everything belonged to a *cosmos* because it belonged somewhere as image to the planetary persons and their myths" (Hillman, 1989a, p. 226). Hillman's admitted mythmaking also reveals that *cosmos* refers to an aesthetic creation, as does its *logos*, cosmology:

This emphasis on descriptive qualities gives back to *cosmology* its original aesthetic meaning. We have lost that first sense of the word. *Cosmos* now means empty, vast, spacey—a video game for astronomers. The Greek word meant orderly, becomingly, duly, an aesthetic arrangement. *Cosmos* once referred to the *anima mundi*, world-soul, an Aphroditic order. And our word "cosmetics," referring to the facial appearance of things, brings to light this original sense.

So, besides its astronomical and metaphysical meanings, *cosmology* implies even more fundamentally an aesthetic world whose essence is constituted in sensory images. Attempts to reduce the account of the world to the fewest coherent principles, even to mathematical formulae, have the intention of revealing by means of scientific elegance this cosmic beauty. (p. 226)

Despite the implication that cosmos is an aesthetic rendering of universal reality, Hillman does not attempt to explain a cosmos as a projection of the human faculty of imagination. Perhaps because he understands imagination not to be a human faculty at all<sup>1</sup> but the process of ordering within an archetypal image (or “planetary person”). Cosmos here is not objective reality, but our ordering of it. Whitehead, as will be shown, seems to understand it to be objective reality-in-process, with some possibility for our ordering of it. It is precisely the denial of an ordering which can be known in advance of the *creative act* of ordering (i.e., becoming) which Bergson implied through duration. This comparison will be renewed at the chapter's end.

The Indo-European root of cosmos is usually considered to be *kes-*, which means “to put in order,” thus the “order” of things. The scientific act of ordering is usually the intellectual act of defining things in ever smaller and more intricate categories: *kes-* also means “to cut,” from whence we derive castigate, castrate, and caste (Claiborne, 1989). Thus, cosmology here implies a vast “de-fining” of all the objects and properties in the universe.

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<sup>1</sup>“Grand—imagination not a faculty! The claim that it is a faculty has been precisely what has deceived us most about imagination. We have considered it one function among others; whereas it may be essentially different from thinking, willing, believing, etc. Rather than an independent operation or place, it is more likely an operation that works within the others as a place which is found only through the others—(is it their ground?).” (Hillman, 1979b, p. 133)

There is another possible etymology which gives precedence to the human mythopoeic collaboration in reality. *Kosmos* may derive instead from the suffixed o-grade form of the Indo-European prefix *kens-* = (*kons-mo*). *Kens-* refers to “speaking solemnly” (Calvert, 1982), thus cosmos makes order through solemn speech. It may worth noting that the root of the Greek *mythos* may be *muthos*, or word (Levin, 1960). It is possible that cosmology and mythology already have a familial relationship: a solemn speaking of the sacred word—*muthos* as *Logos*? *Muthos*, in turn, may derive from *mu-*, perhaps the first expressive sound (Harrison, 1903/91), which in turn could well have evolved into *murmur* and *memor*.

Imagination in Western philosophy has oscillated in position from being foundational to all thought to being derided as the distraction of fantasy. Plato turned to myth for his deepest formulations; Kant distinguished between reproductive and productive (or transcendental) imagination. Reproductive imagination works only through association and is itself possible, according to Kant, because it is founded in the transcendental imagination, which is an active, spontaneous power (Avens, 1980). Like the pre-Socratics, Kant seemed to understand rational thought as an aspect of imagination imagining itself. Kant, however, seems to have sought shelter in pure reason in later writings and finally understood imagination as did David Hume in this terse dismissal: “Nothing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of imagination” (Hume, I. IV. vii.).

Of course, Coleridge, Wordsworth and the Romantics understood reason to be the threat to flights of imagination. It was objective rationalism, Wordsworth intimated, which made us feel that for "Nature," and

*for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not. —Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn. (1807b)*

The later Nietzschean overflow of mythopoeic emotionalism hardened the reaction against such anti-rationality by logical positivists, among others, and was still strong in the time when Whitehead was writing.

Whitehead knew that language was built on image and metaphor and would never be as precise as the mathematics from which he had emerged into speculative philosophy (Wallack, 1980). He recognized that, like mythopoeic thought, imagination was the basis of all speculation. Here (1978) he insists, however, that the difference in his metaphysics is in the criticism of the concepts thus envisaged:

The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation. The reason for the success of this method of imaginative rationalization is that, when the method of difference fails, factors which are constantly present may yet be observed under the influence of imaginative thought. Such thought supplies the differences which the direct observation lacks. It can even play with inconsistency; and can thus throw light on the consistent, and persistent, elements in experience by comparison with what in imagination is inconsistent with them. (Whitehead, p. 5)

Whitehead seems well aware that his rational metaphysics will be hard to prove logically with inexact language, built as it is on relative inference. He accepts that metaphysical explanation can only “approximate” truth yet to be testable it must make meaning within a self-referential system:

No metaphysical system can hope entirely to satisfy these pragmatic tests. At the best such a system will remain only an approximation to the general truths which are sought. In particular, there are no precisely stated axiomatic certainties from which to start. There is not even the language in which to frame them. . . . But no language can be anything but elliptical, requiring a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning in its relevance to immediate experience. (p. 13)

Imagination, then, by Whitehead’s own admission, surrounds even a cosmology as seemingly profound as his own. But to what extent can it be understood as “mythopoeic”?

First of all, some may question whether or not Whitehead starts without any “axiomatic certainties” as he claims. “God” must be among the most used terms in *Process and Reality*. God in his primordial nature is present at the “beginning” and in his consequent nature is there at the “end.” Whitehead’s “process” seems linear, ongoing, but in this sense is cyclical. Whitehead calls this a presupposition (p. 44) and it is interesting to note that—again through etymology—the very term “God” may have derived from an infinitive verb form meaning “to invoke.”<sup>1</sup> Like Homer or Hesiod in his cosmogony (and cosmology) asking for inspiration—“Sing, O Muse...”,—

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<sup>1</sup>God, *gheu(e)*- = to call, invoke (Claiborne)

Whitehead may himself be invoking cosmic inspiration for what is widely recognized as an inspired system.

Whitehead's cosmology is not specifically a mythology, however, especially as it is not claimed as a revelation or used as code for ritual.<sup>1</sup>

Henri Frankfort, the great archeologist of the most ancient civilizations, differentiated between mythopoeic and theoretical thought:

Myth, then, is to be taken seriously, because it reveals a significant, if unverifiable, truth—we might say metaphysical truth. But myth has not the universality and the lucidity of theoretical statement. It is concrete, though it claims to be inassailable in its validity. It claims recognition by the faithful; it does not pretend to justification before the critical. (Frankfort, 1946/61, p. 16)

Though Whitehead elaborated his cosmology into finely tuned conceptual abstractions, he also recognized that no system can be logically complete and that future generations would probably pick his system apart (Whitehead, chap. I, sec. II, II, IV.) Certainly his speculative concerns are very similar to those of early man, who “entangled in the immediacy of his perceptions, recognized the existence of certain problems which transcend the phenomena. He recognized the problem of origin and the problem of *telos*, of the aim and purpose of being” (Frankfort, p. 17).

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<sup>1</sup>“Myth is a form of poetry which transcends poetry in that it proclaims a truth; a form of reasoning which transcends reasoning in that it wants to bring about the truth it proclaims; a form of action, of ritual behaviour, which does not find its fulfillment in the act but must proclaim and elaborate a poetic form of myth.” (Frankfort, 1946/61, p. 16)



Poetry derives from “poesis,” a making or a creation (Morris). In this understanding, especially underscored by Whitehead’s emphasis on primal creativity, his cosmology, a *logos* of “solemn saying” is also mythopoesis, a “making with words.” Many of those words refer specifically to the sacred, and often to the eternal. It seems to this writer that cosmologizing is mythmaking, but it is possible that such a view depends on the etymological dictionary employed.

More important, perhaps, to the question at hand, is whether or not Whitehead reserved a place for such elements or “faculties” as inspiration, aesthetic memory, or the mythopoeic imagination within his system. Where is the present moment—the inspired instant—in his process? To examine this, an outline of his cosmological system must be attempted.

**§Whitehead’s Ultimates.** Influenced by Einstein’s theory of relativity, Whitehead developed his theory based on space-time, rather than understanding space and time as separate dimensions of the same unfolding reality. We perceive extension in space-time and understand reality to be present and solid:

We must first consider the perceptive mode in which there is clear, distinct consciousness of the ‘extensive’ relations of the world. These relations include the ‘extensiveness’ of space and the ‘extensiveness’ of time. Undoubtedly, this clarity, at least in regard to space, is obtained only in ordinary perception through the senses. This mode of perception is here termed ‘presentational immediacy.’ In this ‘mode’ the contemporary world is consciously prehended as a continuum of extensive relations. (Whitehead, p. 61)

The senses, however, are later developments upon a deeper, less conscious mode of awareness called *prehension*. This accepted, experience need not be restricted to entities with sensory organs.

On this basis, it not absurd to attribute a vague kind of emotional-purposive perceptivity to those lower organisms that are devoid of sensory organs. . . . To say that all individual events *prehend* the things in their environments is to say that they take influences from them into themselves and have some sort of emotional-appetitive response to them" (Griffin, 1988, p. 153).

In this statement, David Ray Griffin, prominent modern Whitehead interpreter and applier, does not pursue the matter the matter beyond "lower organisms" to its smaller and more momentary limit: the actual *entity*, for the space oriented, or the actual *event*, for the time oriented, or, simply, the *occasion*, defined by Whitehead as "a momentary experiential event which occupies (or constitutes) a region that is spatial as well as temporal" (In Griffin, p. 151).

So instead of semi-permanent "things" changing through a continuous flow of time, we have experiencing occasions which appear, *prehend* their environments, perhaps adapt to some "extent," and disappear as *experiencing* occasions to become completed objective occasions. These occasions include events at the atomic level and those of macrocosmic stature. The occasion is the act of *becoming*, like Bergson's duration, the process of which is going on "all the time." These are the existential realities, according to Whitehead—occasions becoming, achieving satisfaction, and perishing. Their *prehension* guides them to satisfaction and alters them through the environmental influence of other occasions. In their "perishing"

they become fixed as objective occasions which will now influence the becoming of subjects of new actual events. As Griffin (1988) explains:

an object is an event that had been, in itself, a subject. Accordingly, it *has the kind of stuff a subject can receive, i.e., feelings*, whether conscious or unconscious—feelings of derivation, feelings of desire, feelings of attraction and repulsion. . . . By conceiving of each event as *having been* a subject of feeling prior to being a felt object, we can understand how an object can influence a subject. (p. 155)

This is the world according to Whitehead. We must look deeper into Whitehead's speculations to discover the alpha point of his cosmology.

In the beginning—metaphorically speaking since “non-temporal” does not constitute linearity—was pure creativity and God in his primordial nature. Unlike Bergson and others, Whitehead does not identify God pantheistically with “*The force that through the green fuse drives the flower*” (Thomas, 1936)—the primal force of creativity—but as a non-temporal actual entity on his own. Creighton Peden (1981) concludes that Whitehead’s creativity “is without character or individuality of its own. It is the active, creative force of the universe, being conditioned by the objective immortality of the actual world and by God” (p. 35). Bergson would likely accept condition one.

Studying Whitehead is often a matter of learning a new terminology, but, as in all mythically-bounded language systems, each term has meaning only in reference to other terms and the meta-meaning of the entire language. Some terms never emerge, it seems, as actual entities—just as in Whitehead’s system actual entities are really processes. Here at the *illud tempus* of Whitehead’s cosmogony, it seems important to understand the

difference between the conceptions of “creativity” and “God,” since specifically human creativity will be the subject of the next section.

Creativity as a first principle allows Whitehead to avoid the mechanistic view of straightforward cause and effect determination and to account for the “dendritic” nature of evolution. Further, his conjectures about eternal objects, aims, and even God’s primordial nature, which—combined with the also primordial creativity—allow him to explain the unpredictable outcome of each “concrescence” of occasions which results in “novelty” in the universe:

‘Creativity’ is the universal of universals characterizing ultimate matter of fact. It is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively.

‘Creativity’ is the principle of *novelty*. An actual occasion is a novel entity diverse from any entity in the ‘many’ which it unifies. Thus ‘creativity’ introduces novelty into the content of the many, which are the universe disjunctively. The ‘creative advance’ is the application of this ultimate principle of creativity to each novel situation which it originates. . . .

The ultimate metaphysical principle is the advance from disjunction to conjunction, creating a novel entity other than the entity . . . . The novel entity is at once the togetherness of the ‘many’ which it finds, and also it is one among the disjunctive ‘many’ which it leaves; it is a novel entity, disjunctively among the many entities which it synthesizes. The many become one and are increased by one. (Whitehead, 1978, p. 26)

Creativity is both the ultimate reality and the active principle in the concrescence of the many to produce a novel actual occasion, as in Whitehead’s expressive phrase: “The many become one and are increased by one.” The novel actual occasion then embodies its novel creativity as one

of the many to be used in the concrescence of the next actual occasion, an increase of one. In this way, creativity may be understood as inhering as self-creativity in each event. As Peden interprets:

Because of creativity, every actual entity, temporal or non-temporal, is to some degree self-creative. Every actual entity, being to some degree self-creative, is a novel being. On the basis of novelty ... an actual entity is a new form in the universe. The doctrine of creativity points to the fact that constantly new forms are being created and are perishing in the universe. (p. 35)

If reality were understood as purely creative, however, then literally anything could happen. Reality would be a chaos of novelty in which even dendritic patterns could turn back upon themselves in disarray. To explain the seeming form of the onflow of reality, Whitehead *invokes* an ultimate actuality to guide his ultimate reality. Griffin (1989b) theologizes:

God, who is the source of all physical, aesthetic, and ethical principles, is the *ultimate actuality*. . . . The ultimate reality and the ultimate actuality are equally primordial. God does not create creativity, but neither does creativity generate God. Each equally presupposes the other. Creativity that is uninfluenced by God's persuasion toward ordered beauty therefore never occurs. (p. 31)

God is present "at the beginning" as a hidden persuader, so to speak. This is what Whitehead calls God's primordial nature. In this idea, God is understood as an actual entity like all other actual entities (which are also occasions), except that God "is non-temporal. This means that God does not perish and become objectively immortal as temporal actual entities." (Peden, p. 34)

This suggests all sorts of difficulties in Whitehead's previous definition of actual entities as becoming from a previous many, but this is not the place to consider them. Suffice to say that God, in his primordial nature, influences the process of occasions by sustaining within him "eternal objects" which contain the *potential subjective aims* for the becoming of temporal actual entities. Eternal objects are conceptions which have no reference to any definite entity in the temporal world, but

An eternal object is always a potentiality for actual entities; but in itself, as conceptually felt, it is neutral as to the fact of its physical ingression in any particular actual entity of the temporal world. 'Potentiality' is the correlative of 'givenness.' The meaning of 'givenness' is that what *is* 'given' might not have been 'given'; and what *is not* 'given' *might have been* 'given.' (Whitehead, p. 44)

As indicated, it is the eternal objects which provide the subjective aim in the concrescence of the many into an actual occasion of experience. There will be more on this event later, but for now it should be noted that in Whitehead's view the eternal objects are *present* as potentials "in the beginning" sustained by God's primordial nature, and they are also *present* "at the end" as future possibilities toward which the creativity of each actual event aims. These everpresent potentialities for experience, which approach randomness in their sense of being "given" or "not given," are the reason for *beginning* and *end* being understood as metaphors (disguising circularity?).

God is also understood as having a "consequent nature." This is the physical prehension by God of the actual events/entities of the evolving universe. Whitehead indicates this is how temporal entities achieve

“objective immortality” after attaining satisfaction of their subjective aims and perishing as an actual experience. These objective entities are no longer capable of change or experience, but they never cease to exist, apparently, in the mind of God. In this way, all objective entities have a potential influence upon the present experience of an actual event. (Whitehead, 1978)

Finally, God has a “superjective nature.” It is in this manner that God influences the creativity of each actual event toward noble or harmonious ends, but does not determine those ends. An important question arising here is the creation of dissonance or evil. In the self-creation of each actual entity, is it possible to create destruction, that is, to coalesce into an experiencing event without the superjective influence of God? Whitehead’s theologian interpreter, Griffin, indicated above that such things do not occur. And, as I have shown, Whitehead understands all possible aims—the eternal objects—to be sustained by God in his primordial nature. Griffin (1989) interprets Whitehead as implying that higher order self-creations—human beings—are capable of evil aims:

From the point of view of a theology of universal creativity, the existence of chaos and evil is no surprise. They are to be expected, given a multiplicity of centers of creative power. The surprise is the existence of order and goodness. They beg for explanation in terms of an all-inclusive creative influence. (p. 43)

Chaotic or evil creations can only be explained by having aims not within God. But what else was there “in the beginning”? Only a non-differentiated creativity, according to Whitehead. Anything non-differentiated

is usually conceived as being in the primordial state known to many mythologies as chaos. Perhaps creativity, especially human creativity which has such expanded memory capacity, partakes simultaneously of chaotic and divine essences. Divinely "underinfluenced" creativity may not be creative but destructive, according to Whitehead. Yet it must be understood as creative if it is a novel concrescence of the many into a one to increase the many by one. Every novel concrescence is the result of both "past" occasions and an aim toward eternal objects, even those novel occasions conjured by human minds. It is at least conceivable that Whitehead left room for eternal objects not sustained by his harmonious, ordered, and morally correct God. If so, such eternal objects need not be understood as evil/chaotic/satanic. Where would one place the potential of an eternal object which inspires a mischievous, but innocuous aim for an actual event?

God, even his three natures, should not be understood as being omnipotent. His superjective nature potentially affects the creativity of events only through the multiplicity of eternal objects:

This doctrine applies also to the primordial nature of God, which is his complete envisagement of eternal objects; he is not thereby directly related to the given course of history. The given course of history presupposes his primordial nature, but his primordial nature does not presuppose it. (Whitehead, p. 44)

God and his natures are possibly unnecessary abstractions for seeking archetypal memory or mythopoeic imagination. However, Whitehead's cosmology is built within such abstractions and it seems



necessary to touch upon them. Hartshorne (1981) has commented how Whitehead's three-natured God and the seemingly infinite potentials for concrescence found in the eternal objects seem to be a multiplying of abstractions which have no need of, or logical relationship to, each other.

For my purposes, it seems worth observing that Whitehead's metaphysics implies a process of becoming within a divine order which ultimately is without beginning or end. This may even apply to microcosmic elaborations, since the three natures of God are closely mirrored in the subjectivity of becoming and perishing during each actual occasion. One major difference is that each occasion looks to past occasions for some of its aims in concrescence, but God, at least in his primordial nature, has no past.

The question of Whitehead's strict ethical dualism within the non-temporal God-influenced cosmic process cannot be resolved here. The related question of the freedom and purpose of the human imagination within such a cosmology must be addressed by examining the unfolding occasion, itself, for evidence of a moment of spontaneous (progressive or regressive) vision.

**§Process: The Elusive Present.** The quest for a purely spontaneous present in Whitehead's system may well be in vain. Every actual event occurs through a concrescence of past or objective actual events. The creativity, the novelty, the aim of each occurring actual event is always

unique to itself but it is brought about by *the creative potential still contained within those past actual events*.

The influence of the multitude of past actual events, i.e., objective occasions, upon the many becoming a novel one is called by Whitehead efficient causation. The influence of the eternal objects, the aim of the concrescence, is called final causation (Whitehead). We usually imagine the latter as lying in the future or as teleological causation. This may be metaphorically valid, but Whitehead also emphasizes the creative potential which inheres within each objective occasion but is no longer a potential for experience for that occasion. The creative potential within each objective occasion is a potential only for the unfolding of a present occasion of experience. It is in the combining, i.e. the concrescence, of past potentials that the creative potential of the present event is realized. The aim, itself, *can only exist as potential within the influence of an eternal object* (which may be understood teleologically) (category of explanation vii). The realization of such an aim, however, can only come through the utilization of objective occasions of the past: The many become one and are increased by one.

Though God is present at all stages in the process of becoming and though the eternal objects are potentials for experience which may be understood in the past in terms of their inherence in all objective occasions and their paradigms for relating objective occasions into nexus and though these same eternal objects seem to be potentials without form or substance

on their own which lie in the future as aims, it is our experience of temporal process in the imagined present which gives us clues to all other cosmic events. We experience the passage of time from past into future with all the attendant changes in space-time and have a difficult time, as Whitehead has indicated through his central thesis, trying to locate this present.

As narrowly as we can define the moment, upon examination we find that moment to be in reality a process in which past and future are always implicated. Even our sensory perceptions only allow experience of the "presented locus" (p. 168) of actual events which are themselves in process. The prehensions supporting these sensory perceptions are what bring them into "presentational immediacy" (p. 61-65), but the prehensions are of the causal efficacy behind the sense response. The prehensions are "a direct perception of those antecedent actual occasions which are causally efficacious both for the percipient and for the relevant events in the presented locus" (p. 169).

An event at the atomic level may be an actual entity (or actual occasion or actual event) and so, apparently, may God. Most things that we perceive, it seems, are objective actual entities in some combination. Something such as a rock is not an actual entity; it has no experience and is not in process. Its constituent parts (molecules, atoms, or whatever), however, may be actual entities in the nexus of rockness and they do have experience. Their process is temporally unhurried (relatively speaking) and

their memories and aims are limited to the most basic prehensions and appetitive responses.

Our animal body has extended prehension through the sense organs and our mind has enlarged memory capacity and, it would seem, a wider range of potential responses to efficient and final causality. Despite this, we are not actual entities, either, but compounds of various subjective experiences. Wallack (1980) puts it this way:

Similarly for other cases of sense-perception: a viewer is subject of a sight; a sniffer is subject of a smell; a taster is subject of a flavor; a sentient body is subject of a texture or an ache; and as such all are actual entities. The experiences of sense-perceptions, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling, are naturally very important actual entities for people. . . . In fact, Whitehead allows that an animal body is constructed so as to provide percipient experience of this sort for the animal. (p. 19)

Memory, itself, is “a human percipient experience, although in different mode, just as are the sense perceptions” (Wallack, p. 19). Whitehead, as noted, has also referred to this as the prehension of efficient causality. The point of this for my purpose is that even in the mode of so-called “presentational immediacy” it is *not* the immediate present which we are perceiving, according to Whitehead, but the perceptions are separate subjective entities which our minds perceive (i.e.,prehend) in their causal efficacy, their effect, and unify into the experience we call consciousness. To perceive anything, we must perceive through the *immediate* past.

Another way of putting it is to simply recall that all actual entities are diverse until creatively brought together into a concrescence of experience.

It is only when the aim of the experience is subjectively satisfied that a novel entity ceases to experience and becomes objectified as a past occasion which can now be remembered (prehended, memorially perceived) to influence the next becoming event. Complicated as this may sound, it seems clear Whitehead means that nothing can be perceived until it is a perceivable object. And nothing is an object until it has ceased to exist as an experiencing subject in process and has become an objective entity. *All we sensorially perceive are objects which have already entered the past.*<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that, for Whitehead, all matter is creative. These objective entities are not inert but continue to actively influence experiencing subjects. "The past does not remain past; anything past is presently effecting a present subject, and anything present is in process" (Wallack, p. 142).

Prehension also provides for us an intuition of possibilities which inhere in the past creative possibilities of causal efficacy and in the pure potential of the eternal objects. Being eternal, such potentials lie neither in the past nor in the future but as pure potential they can only be envisioned as being "before" or "around" the process of becoming. They are already "within" the process by being contained in each objective entity and its relationships but then they are no longer imperceptibly pure; as pure potential they are intuitively apprehended only as final causes towards which

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<sup>1</sup>Bergson's duration again: intellect extends memory into the anticipated future, from which "position" perception is achieved back through memory.

we in the elusive present can aim our becoming. To prehend a pure potency in and of itself without the causal efficacy of objective occasions is inconceivable. *Remembering is imagining*. But perhaps it is such non-conceptual prehension of pure potency which brings some mystics to withdraw from the world or find their only response in silence.

It would seem that as causal efficacy meets final causation there must be an instant when the aim is chosen, a "flashpoint" of decision to move the process of becoming toward a particular type of concrescence and subsequent satisfaction. It would seem there must be moment of balance when negative causation is excluded, positive causation included, and teleological (final) causation accepted as purpose. This could be the moment when imaginative spontaneity actually becomes an ultimate necessity of process and the only actual and real experience of the present we can possibly have.

Griffin (1988) implies that there is such a moment when the decision is made or when the aim is chosen:

The momentary subject then makes a self-determining response to these causal influences; this is the moment of final causation, as the event aims at achieving a synthesis for itself and for influencing the future. (p. 24)

It sounds like the *moment* has been found, until Griffin goes on to explain that final causation is but a response to efficient causation in Whitehead's system:

This final causation is in no way unrelated to efficient causation; it is a purposive response to the efficient causes on the event. When this moment of subjective final causation is over, the event becomes an

object which exerts efficient causation on future events. Exactly what efficient causation it exerts is a function both of the efficient causes upon it *and* of its own final causation. Hence, the efficient causes of the world do not run along as if there were no mentality with its final causation. An event does not simply transmit to others what it received; it may do this, but it also may deflect and transform the energy it receives to some degree or another, before passing it on. (1988, p. 24)

This indicates that the “final causation” inspired by the eternal objects does not just imply teleological or primordial potential, but also implies that such archetypal potential *inheres* in each actual occasion. It does so through the causal efficacy of the objective occasions which had their own ingression of final causation during their concrescence. Though objective occasions are no longer in process, the ingressed final causation—or eternal potential—continues to be active through them. Past, present, and future are simultaneously implicated in process. *Teleological inspiration may be activated through remembering.* Perhaps some of Whitehead’s “Categories of Explanation” may summarize what I have been trying to elucidate:

*Categories of Explanation:*

(i) That the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities. Thus actual entities are creatures; they are also termed ‘actual occasions.’

(ii) That in the becoming of an actual entity, the *potential* unity of many entities in disjunctive diversity—actual and non-actual—acquires the *real* unity of the one actual entity; so that the actual entity is the real concrescence of many potentials.

(iii) That in the becoming of an actual entity, novel prehensions, nexūs, subjective forms, propositions, multiplicities, and contrasts, also become; but there are no novel eternal objects.

(vii) That an eternal object can be described only in terms of its potentiality for ‘ingression’ into the becoming of actual entities; and

that its analysis only discloses other eternal objects. It is a pure potential.

(x) That the first analysis of an actual entity, into its most concrete elements, discloses it to be a concrescence of prehensions, which have originated in its process of becoming.

(xix) That the fundamental types of entities are actual entities, and eternal objects; and that the other types of entities only express how all entities of the two fundamental types are in community with each other, in the actual world.

(xxiv) The functioning of one actual entity in the self-creation of another actual entity is the 'objectification' of the former for the latter actual entity. The functioning of an eternal object in the self-creation of an actual entity is the 'ingression' of the eternal object in the actual entity.

(xxv) The final phase in the process of concrescence, constituting an actual entity, is one complex, fully determinate feeling. This final phase is termed the 'satisfaction.' (Whitehead, pp. 23-25)

From this, I feel I can safely conclude that there is no "given" present moment for the human subject or for any experiencing entity whatsoever in Whitehead's cosmology, unless it is the non-sensory instant (Bergson's intuitional duration) of *apprehension* of an aim toward an eternal object. As one actual entity is objectified in influencing another, the ingression of an eternal object is taking place. All actual entities in the process of becoming are made of a great array of other actual entities and their concrescence and influence by final causes is happening at different rates in different regions. The satisfaction which occurs upon the attainment of "one complex fully determinate feeling" (Griffin, 1988, p. 154) is a *temporal movement* from outer to inner. As compound entities, we have feeling and consciousness, but according to Whitehead the image of consciousness as an ongoing stream of actual durations may be appropriate after all.



**§Space-Time of the Mythopoeic Imagination.** Does an ongoing stream of consciousness negate any chance for the mythopoeic imagination? If the mythopoeic imagination can only exist in a spontaneous present then it must. But a spontaneous present could have no substance, no consciousness as we know it, if all perceivable entities have already become temporally objective. A spontaneous present could only be absolute awareness of potentials for concrescence, the pure potentials of the eternal objects. That is to say, *substantially* conscious of nothing, or of everything—same thing—so its conscious content could only be nil.

This is what Whitehead implies about the primordially natured God, creativity, and the eternal objects: that nothing can be said about them in themselves. He does use the adjectives “non-temporal” and “eternal,” however, and, as Wittgenstein pointed out, eternity is found neither at the beginning nor at the end of time:

Proposition 6.4311: “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.” (In Campbell, 1968, p. 676)

In this way, the present must contain all extra-temporal potentiality and all timelessness, including the silent eternal objects. Similarly, silence is the only “response” to such being-in-itself. Silence, however, is not mythpoesis. Could it be that our sensory *and self* perceptions take place an “instant” into the past, just as matter appears to ultimately consist of energy “particles” travelling slower than the speed of light (Toben & Wolf, 1982)? If so, then the

objective referents of memory and speech as *techne* can refer only to themselves in a (vicious?) circle of repetition.

Most language is built on a response to other language whose referents may be actual entities. The realistic, *actual* language Whitehead employs is just such a self-referential theoretic code. Even though he constructs a new terminology, his words all refer to actual entities within his system. Every term refers to actual entities in their objective form: as efficient causation, as past occasions, as objectively immortal in the mind of God.

Poetry, however, is sometimes perceived as turning away from the possibilities of causal efficacy and attempting to allow language to speak. Bachelard (1987) sees the poet as attaining a non-objective awareness, similar to that of the mystic, but the poet, instead of remaining silent, becomes herself the "objective" occasion for the speaking of such silence: "Poetry then is truly the first manifestation of silence. It lets the attentive silence, beneath the images, remain alive" (p. 25).

This sounds extreme, perhaps, but I am trying to map the source of mythopoeic inspiration; many writers, visionaries, and mythmakers seem to feel this inspiration is an important part of their art. Many also admit to a feeling of dismay at the impossibility of attaining the full depth of vision hinted at by the first rapture of inspiration. The actual occasion may achieve satisfaction but the eternal object, or the archetype, or the Muse cannot

occasions. It is similar to the inevitable fall of Eliade's *illud tempus*—the sacred time of creation— into the profane time of history (or the shrinking of personal awareness within the habitus).

This does not seem strange when it is considered that, from our point of view, eternal objects must use as tools for the expression of their dynamism only individual human actual occasions which can act only from the causal efficacy of past (objective) occasions. Objective occasions are nearly infinite; at least they have achieved immortality in the mind of God. An electron may have a memory for the efficient causation of objective occasions that had achieved satisfaction and become objective only micro-seconds ago. A human being, as a compound actual occasion capable of both physical and mental prehension, may conceivably *delve memorially well beyond his own lifetime*. Because of the extent of awareness of the becoming actual occasion of experience (i.e., the present as process) we humans also possess a relatively vast capacity for memory. This leads to the seeming contradiction that mythopoeic inspiration, though derived from an unattainable present, expresses itself only through the depths of imaginative memory.

Such memory increases human freedom which, apparently, worries Whitehead in his ethical dualism. It certainly worries Griffin (1988), the theologian who declares his “Whiteheadianism”:

The importance of efficient causes, i.e., of influence from the past, does not diminish as one moves toward the higher individuals;

indeed, in a sense higher beings are influenced by *more* past events than are lower ones. But the totality of efficient causes from the past becomes less and less explanatory of experience and behavior, and the individual's own present self-determination in terms of desired ends becomes more explanatory. (p. 24)

It seems this enlarged capacity for reception and "present self-determination in terms of desired ends" makes the human creature more valuable in Whitehead's scheme of things. This value must be because of the human ability to imagine unique possibilities. Since possibilities are unimaginable without eternal objects, the human being must be able to imagine possibilities by prehending/remembering the primordial influence of creativity, in itself, without the mollifying influence of God in his primordial nature (or by prehending, as "aim," toward the teleological influence of creativity—since eternal objects are "eternal," they must be in the eternal present which we can only imagine as *alpha* or *omega*). To an ethical dualist, such "present self-determination" can be understood as dangerous:

A world with more valuable creatures is therefore *necessarily* a more dangerous world, both because higher creatures can more radically deviate from the divine persuasion for them and because this deviation can create more havoc than the deviations of lesser creatures. (Griffin, 1989, p. 43)

To a mythologist, however, this is the place/time of human creation: By employing memorial antecedents as far, as deep, as wide as the human mind can conceive, we are bringing to the present unfolding actuality qualities not found within any language system in itself. The mythopoeic

imagination may make words, poems, and narratives without necessary reference to concrete objective actual referents.

As pointed out at the beginning of this survey, a cosmology is, itself, an aesthetic rendering of universal reality. Whitehead even indicates that process begins with imagination “like the flight of an aeroplane,” and that any metaphysical system requires “a leap of the imagination to understand its meaning” (Whitehead, p. 4). Though thoughts and perception—our usual selves—can never exist in the elusive present, imagination, inspiration, and archetypal memory, by Whitehead's own suggestions, just may.

Whitehead's system of reality as process can be seen as ideal for exemplifying both the habituated consciousness (*techné*) and the mythopoeic imagination (*memor*) in action. Habituated consciousness works and wants to work only from efficient causation, and does not expect to need to look too far away in time or space to find appropriate causation to extend into the next actual occasion of experience. Habituated consciousness picks its aims from among past objective occasions and does not expect the sudden inspiration from an eternal object in itself, either in a non-conceptual instant or in the depths of the past.

The mythopoeic imagination, however, may be understood as being drawn to the murmur of a past so ancient it is hidden in the inorganic. Such an imagination dreams of experiencing the unsayable then struggling to use ancient referents to find a way to express such experience. The mythopoeic

imagination seeks to make myths from myths and to take full poetic license to express them in a manner which the rational mind will find confusing, chaotic, or even dangerous.

Mythopoesis is not so easily classified as Griffin would prefer, it seems to this writer. Mythmaking is expression through the arts which work through the materials of distant memory (Campbell, 1968). The aim of the creative present is an inspired concrescence. The inspiration of the arts are the Muses, which are, after all, the daughters of Mnemosyne—the goddess Memory. It may be said that the mythopoeic imagination expresses that which the habituated consciousness cannot perceive and only dimlyprehend. The mythopoeic imagination is not entirely conscious at all but perhaps partakes of the mysterious essences of primordial awareness (i.e., the eternal objects) which deliver the potential and the need for mythmaking and artistic expression.

Perhaps it begins to be clear why I feel Whitehead's cosmology, though denying consciousness of the instant, still ideally provides a schema to describe the working of the mythopoeic imagination. Firstly, though working within the theoretic paradigm, once Whitehead gets beyond the ideas of process and relativity, he engages in a grand mythmaking venture—from God's three natures to his eternal objects (which are, it seems, present everywhere as potential and nowhere as themselves). These eternal objects suggest Jungian archetypes or what Hillman would personify

as deities: the source and end of imagination and the gravity of memory but forever hidden in themselves (Hillman, 1975b).

The more a consciousness is able toprehend aims (eternal objects, not “final causes”—nothing eternal can be final), the more that consciousness is able to avoid determination from the more restrictive essential causes. However, there are limitations on such free prehensions, according to Whitehead, unless there is way of being which eludes our present understanding in this “cosmos”:

But there is no such fact as absolute freedom; every actual entity possesses only such freedom as is inherent in the primary phase ‘given’ by its standpoint of relativity to its actual universe. Freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other. (Whitehead, p. 133)

Still there is more or less freedom. The mythopoeic imagination is freer and is given far greater depth of memory and perhaps even a greater sense of inspirational presence than is the habituated consciousness. Some, like Griffin, will continue to argue that imaginative freedom is dangerous without God’s clearly defining for us the rights and the wrongs, but Whitehead, himself, seems more concerned with expressing his reality than demanding imperatives of behavior. According to Prigogine and Stengers (1984): “Whitehead understood perhaps more sharply than anyone else that the creative evolution of nature could never be conceived if the elements composing it were defined as permanent, individual entities that maintained their identity throughout all changes and interactions” (p. 95).

At the same time, however, Whitehead had to explain the philosophy of relation and of innovative becoming so he could avoid the idealist trap. Each identity receives its identity from other identities: "In the process of its genesis, each existent unifies the multiplicity of the world, since it adds to this multiplicity an extra set of relations" (Prigogine & Stengers, p. 95).

The mythopoeic imagination surrounds Whitehead's entire project, it seems to me, and is to be found wherever eternal objects or their effects can be placed. Furthermore, the mythopoeic imagination is found in the power of human memory, its ability to go beyond the immediate objective occasions to such ancient objective occasions that we are dealing with foundational myths of consciousness. It may be such mythopoeic imagination which can realize its potential to express the finally inexpressible eternity of the present.

**§Postmodern Science.** So much has been written about "postmodern science," "visionary physics," space-time anomalies, or what have you, that there seems little point in continuing the exercise in detail here. The philosophies I have touched on, from the Tibetans to Whitehead, have in common the denial of an objective reality which exists with or without us basically as we presently perceive it. To so imagine a world whose objects have the colour, texture, proportion, or position *in themselves* seems no longer tenable in the light of even high school physics. The visionary physicist, Fritjof Capra, assures us of *something*, at least, "out there":



There is a reality, but there are no things, no trees, no birds. These patterns are what we create. As we focus on a particular pattern and then cut it off from the rest, it becomes an object. Different people will do it differently, and different species will do it differently. What we see depends on how we look . . . (Capra & Steindl-Rast, 1991, p. 165)

Bergson and Whitehead were not idealists in the traditional sense of the term, yet their philosophies were expounded because of their anticipation of the reversal of fortune realism, logical positivism, and mechanistic science were to have. Perhaps Bergson was closer to the postmodern view of an ultimately unknowable universe because he understood different times and places to evolve different senses of duration (Bergson 1911/83). Whitehead, on the other hand, attempted to explicate a "cosmology" (1978), which implied an identical order in all times and places. Whitehead's process does emphasize creativity as the force behind that process so his system is somewhat open-ended, yet it is finally limited—not by the eternal objects—but by the providence of God.

Whitehead was, of course, a mathematician *par excellence*, and so was perhaps drawn to totalistic orderings. He likely wrote *Process and Reality* before he had ever heard of Kurt Gödel or his proof that any axiomatic system or its negation was unprovable within itself (Runes, 1961), yet he implied the process of reality through time was not smooth and even but subject to sudden alterations. As he stated in applying this to education:

The pupil's progress is often conceived as a uniform steady advance undifferentiated by change of type or alteration in pace. . . . I hold that this conception of education is based upon a false psychology of the

process of mental development which has gravely hindered the effectiveness of our methods. (Whitehead, 1970, pp. 7,8)

Bergson was not a scientist but was very much interested in the science of his times and noted even in those pre-Einsteinian<sup>1</sup> days how local conditions provided the relative conditions for the support or obliteration of the unpredictable mutations in nature (1911/83). This localization of phenomena and the irreversible creative evolution of time has echoes today in chaos theory (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984)<sup>2</sup> with its implication of differing vortices of order and sudden dispersal. Beyond this is Sheldrake's "formative causation" (1988) in which not just the way things react is different in different times and places in the universe, but the way things *are*—the fundamental physical laws—is different as well. This is because of each "morphogenetic" field's "habits" as determined by its "morphic resonance"—which sounds very much like memory. Such propositions seem to open the way for a "creative evolution," as Bergson predicted: Creatively discovering alternate morphic resonances is to discover alternate realities.

Our time and space travels, however, seem to be drastically limited within the laws of our present reality. There may be parallel universes or different causational fields if we accept that "vibrations of thought patterns in

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<sup>1</sup>Though Bergson and Einstein later engaged in public debates about the nature of "scientific" or "durational" time (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Doll, Jr. (1988) has applied chaos theory in several interesting ways to curriculum theory.

specific harmonies structure all 'matter' and light as we experience it" (Toben & Wolf, 1982, p. 61). There may be the exotics of string theory, or all possibilities from precognition to levitation, and some think dream, imagination, and fantasy are the key to other worlds. Black holes may be "breathing" creation and destruction into an anti-matter, faster-than-light universe, just as it does into our matter, slower-than-light one. As long as we are "we," however, *Homo symbolicus* on the third planet from Sol, all of these must remain conjecture.

Bergson and Whitehead changed reality by conceiving of time as a uni-directional flow into unknowns. Like an improvisational jazz combo, these unknowns become knowns as we *harmonize* with that which has gone before. Again memory is seen as the creatrix. Prigogine and Stengers (1984) have strongly come out on the side of time as an arrow, one-way and non-repeatable, though this may be questioned on at least two levels: One is the question of the ultimate fate of the universe, open or closed. The closed universe hypothesis suggests that everything will eventually cease expanding and by its own gravity will go into an extended implosion in which time will be reversed. Another is the idea of there being a timeless "nothingness" or eternity within all moments of time: "There is no such thing as time's direction at the quantum level. All events exist concurrently. . . . Bridges in the quantum foam can connect any event with any other event" (Toben & Wolf, 1982, p. 75). And, of course, there is chance.

Speculation and possibility run rampant and this is precisely why so many of us have embraced the new physics, the new biology, etc. From Einstein, Heisenberg, and Bohr to Hawking, Prigogine, and Bohm (et al.) the perspectives on time of Bergson and Whitehead seem to have been at least *manifested* as “real potential.” The deterministic prison of hard rationality may actually have proven to be a hermetic container, for as the released élan vital breaks through its seams to reveal possibilities at least as potent as our “wildest dreams,” it must be admitted that doubt at the irrationality of our fantasies of better worlds would always have limited our actions in this one. In the hermetic container of science and reason, *techné* may have been transmuted into *memor*—which implies the potential of imagining closer to potency, itself (as in eternal objects, archetypes, or—dare I say it?—gods).

Prigogine and Stengers (1984) give Bergson and Whitehead much credit for anticipating changes in science: “Whitehead’s case as well as Bergson’s convince us that only an opening, a widening of science can end the dichotomy between science and philosophy. This widening of science is possible only if we revise our conception of time” (p. 96). And further:

For [Whitehead], being is inseparable from becoming. Physics and metaphysics are indeed coming together today in a conception of the world in which process, becoming, is taken as a primary constituent of physical existence and where, unlike Leibniz’s monads, existing entities can interact and therefore also be born and die” (p. 303).

Bergson and Whitehead imagined and intricately worked out these possibilities before the sciences ran out of themselves to realize such an

amazing “altarity” (Taylor, 1987). Postmodern science indicates that the depth of memory, or, if you wish, the reach of imagination, may indicate the way toward a reality we have always intuited. It consists of “the empty place in the heart” (Dunne, 1988), but also of the *materiality* of language—a nature that speaks and is spoken to. But for this, we shall have to go to an alternate reality hardly recognized by science and philosophy, but a reality which permeates them both: a mythopoeic reality.

## **Chapter 4: Mythology**

*"... it was not man who made myths but myths, or the archetypal substance they reveal, which made man."*

(Owen Barfield, The Rediscovery of Meaning, p. 75)

**§Death of the Soul.** Time has been perceived by Bergson and Whitehead to have the property of spatial extension. The "revolutions" in many fields of modern (or "postmodern") science seem to agree that time is the effect of the expansion of space. That is to say, we are always already *becoming*, but never become; we are always already *in process*, but never processed and complete. With this seeming escape from circularity—from Nietzsche's *"amor fati"* of the eternal return (1982) or Eliade's cosmic cycles (1963)—we have opened the way for many of our present myths involving the irreversibility of time, including those of evolution, progress, and history. Moreover, the movement toward an unknown opens the space for the possibility of narrative: "a story line of pasts that determine presents and presents that constrain futures" (Gould, 1987).

Time's arrow has been seen as a one-way trip to a predetermined end, such as in Biblical eschatology or the space-contraction<sup>1</sup> hypothesis, or it has simply been regarded as irreversible (Prigogine & Stengers, 1987). Stephen Jay Gould (1987) points out, however, that "arrows and cycles, after all, are only categories of our invention, devised for clarity of insight. They do not blend, but dwell together in tension and fruitful interaction." The repetition of analogous shapes and patterns in nature,<sup>2</sup> among other things, convinces him that the human need for some sort ordered unfolding—time's cycle—is as real as time's arrow: "The same tension and multiplicity have pervaded our Western view of time. Something deep in our tradition requires, for intelligibility itself, both the arrow of historical uniqueness and the cycle of timeless immanence—and nature says yes to both" (p. 200).

A narrative or story needs the ongoing flux of the new or it becomes a mere litany: "And every moment of this universe is new. That is, we now realize that we live not in a static Newtonian space; we live within an ongoing cosmic story" (Swimme, 1988, p. 50). But a storyteller must remember that which has passed to be able to weave a storyline. Such remembering was, perhaps, one of the major roles of the tribal storytellers. Within their memories the past was contained and the time of beginnings could be

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<sup>1</sup>If there is enough matter in the universe, its gravity will limit its expansion and it will be "closed," and eventually contract upon itself.

<sup>2</sup>E.g: The unrelated evolution of wings on birds, bats, and pterodactyls.

re-experienced in ritual, as Eliade indicates in the last section of *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954) called, appropriately, “the terror of history”:

“Interest in the ‘irreversible’ and the ‘new’ in history is a recent discovery in the life of humanity. On the contrary, archaic humanity ... defended itself, to the utmost of its powers, against all the novelty and irreversibility which history entails” (p. 48).

Stephen Jay Gould (1987) seems to think that it is a fear of uncontrollable events which causes us the anxiety of open-ended possibility: “Most cultures have recoiled from a notion that history embodies no permanent stability and that men (by their actions of war), or natural events (by their consequences of fire and famine) might be reflecting the essence of time—and not an irregularity subject to repeal or placation by prayer and ritual” (p. 13). This is, of course, quite likely. Humanity would prefer to feel it is part of a cosmic process which cares about it. On another level, however, the whole notion of *identity* becomes central.

In a previous chapter, I indicated (by way of Eliade) the guilt preliterate people seemed to feel as they experienced a personalized identity-in-time, a guilt which had to be expunged through rituals of cosmic renewal. The guilt and anxiety, then, must always have been made bearable as the myths and tales of the gods of the *illud tempus* were told and retold between the actual acting out of the time of beginnings. They “remembered” their ancestors, their particular culture-heroes, and their gods with whom they once walked at



the time of creation. They knew their *souls*—connected like a silver cord to a beginning which was never far behind them.

We, however, have come to realize that the past is infinite, or at least so deep that it is beyond our comprehension as thinking hominids. Infinite, as well, seem the vast realms of space opening out around us (a “long way” from the security of tribal territory). If there was the guilt of isolated self-ness and the anxiety of open-ended identity for our primitive cousins, then for us moderns how much more guilt and anxiety we must bear! As Pascal (1623-62) wrote at the beginning of this scientific era:

When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant and which know me not, I am frightened, and I am astonished at being here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? by whose order and direction have this place and this time been allotted to me? The eternal silence of those infinite spaces frightens me. (Cited in Barrett, 1986, p. 8)

This discovery of “deep time” (Gould, 1987) and the vastnesses of space are what have led us to shore up our identities within the myths of science and philosophy as separate from all nature, according to William Barrett in *The Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (1986). Mostly he sees the soul “dying” as we identify with our technologies, but in a separate section called “the disappearing self,” he expresses his disturbance over the work of phenomenology, existentialism, and post-structuralism. Instead of a “shored-up” self, he fears here a “desubstantialization of being,”

especially as revealed in the “nihilistic” work of Heidegger and Derrida: “Thus there is a gaping hole at the center of our human being” (p. 140).

This conclusion has been reached by other persons from other times and places who have considered the “hole” differently. Perhaps at this point, however, it is safest only to say that a “desubstantialized self” may be the only self possible in the face of the conclusions of Bergson, Whitehead, and postmodern science. It may be nearer the point of this mythic inquiry to wonder how the self—or being—came to be imagined as “substantial” in the first place. Since the self seems most to be a construction of memory and language, it is there we must look next.

**§Linguistics.** Narrative has been cited previously as being the very stuff of memory and it is memory which gives the self a shape. This being so, the natural conclusion for those of us in curriculum theory is that we should attempt to find ways to get students to discover the narratives which have shaped them and to use narratives to move them toward becoming that which they'd prefer to be. We can only hope “that which they'd prefer to be” is not hateful, dangerous, or in some way socially reprehensible.

But what is a narrative? Is it a story with a beginning, middle, and end? Are myths narratives? Many consider a narrative (and a myth as well) to be a complete story. This brings up two problems which I will attempt to consider: the political and mythical ramifications of closed narrative.

Narrative theory has paradoxically become a source of “authority” among literary critics, according to Bruce Robbins (1992), “in part because it *undermines* authority”:

Within literary studies, narrative is everywhere spoken against, and precisely because it is taken to embody authority. . . . In fact, the distrust of narrative seems to be a point of principle for critics as diverse as Roland Barthes and E. M. Forster. If narrative means militant indeterminacy or relativism to some, to others it is something excessively determined, a hyperstructured vehicle of dogmatic belief that desperately needs to be relativized. It is associated with the illegitimate authority of the foregone and of the pregiven telos, with social or psychological resolution, with an orderly conventionality imposed on the meaningless successiveness of historical reality, with the tyranny of single, authoritative meaning. In short, narrative figures at once as an agency that produces skepticism and as an object requires skepticism. (Robbins, 1992, p. 42)

Robbins goes on to explain (referring to the work of Hayden White) that closure means “moral principle.” When a mere sequence of events is brought to a conclusion under the authority of some moral value, the narrative achieves closure: the closure being a culturally-determined image of life “that is and can only be imaginary” (p. 43).

Opposed to this, he suggests the “discourse,” the narrative *mode* of presentation which is a bearer of indeterminacy in that it cannot be subject to a single authoritative meaning. Such narrative discourse always implies a movement between an assumed speaker and assumed listener (Robbins, 1992).

Mythic narrative seems to have had this discursive quality, at least as long as it was oral. The storyteller—always claiming divine authority—would

sing, recite, or tell his or her narrative combining familiar elements in unique ways according to his or her audience, often without pause and on the spur of the moment. There are even cases of group recitations (Eliade, 1978). Of course, these spontaneous effusions had endings of a sort, but nothing like the moral principles set forth as myth devolved into fable, parable, and folktale (Thompson, 1955).

Moreover, as for the preliterate peoples of Eliade's orgiastic ceremonies of the eternal return, time was not viewed in a historical context whatsoever. Moral narratives could not develop until the development of time's arrow within a centralized authority with a sense of history, which may have come with the long-term establishment of the first hieratic city-states (Campbell, 1990). If time was re-established after immersion in the *illud tempus*, often with the choosing of new names or new social positions, how could long mythic narratives have had time to gain the material to grow? Kristeva (1989) even notes that

In the language of the Abipones of Paraguay, new words were introduced each year, for they abolished by proclamation all words resembling the names of the dead, and replaced them with others. Such proceedings obviously preclude the possibility of a narrative or a history: the language is no longer a depository of the past; it changes with the real passage of time. (p. 52)

Roland Barthes sees mythology as a "part both of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is an historical science: it studies ideas-in-form" (1957/72, p. 112). Barthes understands mythology to limit consciousness, the opposite of mythology as the

expression of the sacred of Mircea Eliade (1959) or the "creative myths" of Joseph Campbell (1968). Barthes and other semiologists understand myths to be the *grand récits* or meta-narratives of Lyotard (1984) which suggest an outline, direction, and limitation for the consciousness of a people. Myth in the closed narrative sense outlined above certainly fits the bill. In this sense, both the ancient myths which prescribed limitations and supported hierarchies and modern myths which do the same—patriotism, economic growth, humanism, etc.—are closed narratives with moral imperatives for conclusions. Instead of seeing "man as a mythmaker," such ideologies may be said to make "man as myth." To discover such "hidden" myths, some think a new science is needed:

Considering man as language and putting language in the place of man constitutes the demystifying gesture par excellence. It introduces science into the complex and imprecise zone of human activities where ideologies and religions are (usually) established. *Linguistics* turns out to be the lever of this demystification; it posits language as an object of science, and teaches us the laws of its functioning. (Kristeva, 1989, p. 4)

In this sense, engaging in dialogue in our classes, questioning assumptions, and writing our memories of the formation of our belief-systems, may be the necessary "demystifying gesture par excellence." If myths are taken to be meta-narratives (Lyotard, 1984), or closed narratives (Robbins, 1992), or ideologies (Barthes, 1957/72), then, indeed, myths (and language as part of their medium) could become "an object of science," as Kristeva (1989) suggests.

But there is a more imaginative, less-closed sense of myth within and beyond the narratives of our remembering: "Myths do not ground, they open" (Hillman, 1979, p. 89). The memory in language becomes mythic when it loses the continuity of strict narrative, or, as some would say, when deconstructed far enough. Kristeva's own statement: "The question '*What is language?*' could and should be replaced with another: '*How was it possible to conceive of language?*'" (1989, p. 5) already points the way to the mythic mind, for we cannot conceive of language until we can conceive of subjectivity—or until "speech began to speak the spoken" (p. 4).

Lévy-Bruhl was an armchair anthropologist who had no doubt about the ultimate superiority of science (Griffin, 1988), yet he was the one who coined the watershed term *participation mystique*<sup>1</sup> (1926/85), to indicate the manner in which the "savage mind" had a dispersed and contradictory identity, at least in our terms. The "savage" could be both himself and someone else simultaneously, or a totem animal or object. His identity could even be that of an unseen "presence" or the group as a whole.

It is difficult for us to imagine such a state of affairs—from our state of being—so we can only theorize from the outside about their state of being. Yet, from the outside, it is worth quoting Kristeva at length, for she uses linguistics to explain how primitive man "perceives the network of language as *solid matter* (p. 53)":

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<sup>1</sup>Mystical participation: communal awareness: identity through difference

What first strikes “modern” man—experienced in today’s theory and linguistic science, and for whom language is exterior to the real, a fine film whose only substance is conventional, fictitious, and “symbolic”—is that in societies that are “primitive,” or as they say, “without history” or “prehistoric,” language is a *substance* and a *material force*. While primitive man *speaks, symbolizes, and communicates*, that is to say, establishes a distance between himself (as subject) and the outside (the real) in order to signify it in a system of differences (language), he does not *know* this act to be an act of idealization or of abstraction, but knows it instead as *participation* in the surrounding universe. While the practice of language really presupposes for primitive man a *distance* with respect to things, language is not conceived of as a mental elsewhere, or as an abstract thought process. It participates as a cosmic element of the body and nature, and is joined with the motor force of the body and nature. Its link with corporal and natural reality is not abstract or conventional, but real and material. Primitive man does not clearly conceive of any dichotomy between matter and spirit, the real and language, or consequently between “referent” and “linguistic sign,” much less between “signifier” and “signified”: for him, they all partake in the same way of *one* differentiated world. (Kristeva, 1989, p. 50)<sup>1</sup>

Language was another substance in a substantial world and any reference to personhood was substantial, as well. The substantiality of the world, itself, has by now been brought into question by process philosophy and postmodern science. Philosophers like Barrett (1986), mentioned above, have yet to relinquish their hold on the substantiality of the self.

Kristeva uses the Lacanian concept of “the real.” Alan Sheridan, in a translator’s note to Lacan’s *Ecrits: A Selection* (1977), explains this important concept this way:

The “real” emerges as a third term, linked to the symbolic and the imaginary; it stands for what is neither symbolic nor imaginary, and

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<sup>1</sup>“Referent”: the supposed object, “signifier”: the phonic image, “signified”: the concept, “sign”: signifier *and* signified. (Saussure, in Kristeva)

remains foreclosed from the analytic experience, which is an experience of speech. What is prior to the assumption of the symbolic, the real in its "raw" state (in the case of the subject, for instance, the organism and its biological needs), may only be supposed, it is an algebraic  $x$ . This Lacanian concept of the "real" is not to be confused with reality, which is perfectly knowable: the subject of desire knows no more than that, since for it reality is entirely phantasmatic. . . . Hence the formula: "the real is the impossible," ... the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped: the umbilical cord of the symbolic. (pp. ix-x)

This "real" cannot be remembered in our reality, which, if not entirely linguistic, is representational. In fact, myths as fictions of narrative closure may be understood as the very barrier which makes "the real impossible." As subjectivity came to be transcribed in language and time simultaneously became perceived historically, memory developed as self-schema (Ross, 1992) which, I submit, takes basically a narrative form,<sup>1</sup> in which form most of us spend our lives attempting to attain a desired climax, i.e., closure.

Schema theory is based on the self's objective view of itself which it has learned through experience over time. Considering the self, as we know it, to be the result of the space created in language for subjectivity, the schema theory of memory points to this self's protective fallibility, as noted by Jeremy Campbell (1989):

The self tends to preserve existing knowledge structures in memory by resisting evidence that might render them suspect, because any

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<sup>1</sup>Despite the computer analogy preferred by Ross and most cognitive psychologists: "Those who approach the study of memory from the standpoint of information processing differentiate among three basic stages: encoding, storage, and retrieval" (Ross, 1992, p. 23).



disruption in the way knowledge is organized in the mind could make it less useful. Big Brother, the revisionist historian, preserves the illusion of his own infallibility by turning a blind eye to awkward facts. . . . Between what we do and what we say we are, stands the schema, which is more consistent than the behavior it mediates. (255)

Self-schemata, though transformable, are what we know as “lived-reality.” How did this dream of unique and consistent identity emerge from the *actual* world of language (leaving aside the “real,” for the moment)?

Kristeva (1989) makes a case for subjectivity being *written* into language. She postulates a graphic system being at least simultaneous with—and possibly earlier than—vocal language. She notes that “speech ... does not isolate the act of signifying—its verb—in a mental elsewhere” (p. 62). She traces writing throughout history in *Language and the Unknown* and concludes that very different senses of self are concomitant with different forms of writing.

In India, writing seems to have come late so that “language tended to become removed from the reality from which it was hardly distinguished by other civilizations, and that linguistic operation became ‘mentalized’ as a *signifying* operation, with a subject as a place of meaning. Man and his language were thus placed like a mirror that reflected an outside” (p. 82). This led, according to Kristeva, to the highly idealistic philosophy of India with its world renunciation and idea of the transcendental self (or soul). This transcendence led to the understanding that the self—*atman*—is in reality *brahman*, the “All” (O’Flaherty, 1980).

Perhaps second only to India in the complexity of its mythological narratives, Greece is famed for its development of Western humanism and logic. Kristeva suggests these developments also came as a result of the attention paid to language as a formal system. The Greeks “conceived of language as autonomous, and, by the same token, of themselves as autonomous subjects. . . . Greeks thought of themselves as subjects existing outside this language, as adults in possession of a real distinct from that of words, in whose reality only children believed” (p. 106). The result was individualism and the idealistic Platonism which so strongly influenced later Christianity, as noted in the last chapter.

My point here, however, is that the narrative self—the sense of a unique subjectivity with its unique history—seems to have appeared first: as language lost its “solidity” and became an abstraction as writing was “subjected” to study and, second: as abstract language abstracted the subject (who was studying it) which could then imagine (through writing!) that it transcended language.

This is, “apparently,” *reality*: inseparable from storied narrative (or schematic memory processing) and forever lost to the “real.” Forever? Despite denying the reality (or retrievability) of the real, this real has never ceased to create the need to attempt to conceptualize it, to actively deny “it,” or in some way to indicate it. The transcendentalism and/or idealism just mentioned may have a *trace* of connection to this real as the “umbilical cord

of the symbolic,” and not just be a displacement of language. Vedantists refer to the all, Buddhists refer to the void, and more recent writers have attempted a number of contortions to get language to evoke or indicate beyond itself: from Derrida’s “trace” (1978) to Taylor’s “altarity” (1987) to Krell’s “on the verge” (1990). Kristeva, herself, has mentioned the “gaping wound” of memory (1987), Carrin Dunne the “empty place in the heart” of memory (1988), and, of course, there’s Barrett’s “gaping hole” (1986).

Such terms may not refer to the nothingness of a “raw” animal, pre-representational *participation mystique*, but only to the absolute impossibility of representing or even imagining it directly, that is, of narrating the real. If it cannot be narrated, it cannot be remembered. Paradoxically, it seems that between the real and the self stands memory (which *is* the self).

Heidegger has obliquely suggested that the only way of becoming aware of this pre-imagistic *real* is through a forgetting to remember the self:

The ecstasis of forgetting something has the character of disengagement vis-à-vis one’s ownmost having-been, indeed in such a way that this disengagement-in-the-face-of closes off what it faces. Because forgetting closes off having-been—such is the peculiar nature of that ecstasis—it closes itself off to itself. Oblivion is characterized by the fact that it forgets not only the forgotten but also the forgetting itself. The vulgar prephenomenological view of things is that forgetting is nothing at all. Oblivion is an elementary mode of the temporality in which at first and for the most part we *are* our own having-been. (1927 lecture. In Krell, 1990, p. 331)

Heidegger’s language *must* turn somewhat upon itself to avoid a narrative entrapment. *Ecstasis* means more than rapture: *ex-*, out + *histanai*, place, or *-stasis*, standstill (as in time), so it implies being out of one’s

senses—as revealed to the self. Becoming as a process which includes one's own "having-been," may be as close to the "eternity of the present" as we can envision from here. This oblivious present—Lacan's *real*—need no more be assumed to be without action or awareness than be assumed to be with it. "Awareness," unlike "consciousness," can be imagined without an object—a non-objectivized state comparable, perhaps, to *participation mystique*. Such a "state" cannot contain the qualities with which memory works, such as representation and identity, yet Nietzsche (1982) has suggested the possibility of a return to this state—which could only be known as a return through some *memory-like* action. Krell (1990) points out some of the paradoxes involved in the Nietzschean experience or ecstasis of the eternal return—the very antithesis of the "irreversibility" of time:

Nietzsche's experience of eternal return, of the *vicious circle*, announces a rupture with the unilinear sense that dominates the erect and oblivious body. By conjoining commencement and end, direction and goal, the circle confounds the history of thought, for which the body is a *property* of the self. The body, as the site and the product of contradictory pulsions, *reversible* pulsions in the sense that they prevail, bide their time, pass, and return, gains a new centrality for thought. The thought of thoughts, eternal return, is thus a bodying thought, *une pensée corporante*. (pp. 278, 279)

If thinking contains within it the antithesis of its seeming progressive volition, that is, if what is said in language always implies a what-is-not-said—as in Lacan's (1977) concept of the unconscious seam or in Derrida's (1978) neologism *la différance*—then the only way to recover that antithesis is through self-forgetting. Self-forgetting—the ecstasis of oblivion—implies a

(deferred?) point-of-action which *does* the forgetting, so, as I say, the “bodying thought” need not imply an inanimate nihilism. It probably does imply, however, a sort of spontaneous courage-to-be (Hillman, 1988) in the face of the great anxiety of self-abandonment—an averted glance, as it were, from the linguistic schemata of self toward what Heidegger (1987) called “the strange and terrible”:

The origin of language is in essence mysterious. And this means that language can only have arisen from the overpowering, the strange and terrible, through man's departure into being. In this departure language was being, embodied in the word: poetry. Language is the primordial poetry in which a people speaks being. (p. 171)

This is in line with Kristeva's conception of a linguistic sense of “*one* differentiated world” (1989, p. 50, above) when language was “solid,” or, as Heidegger says, “language was being.” Here, for the first time perhaps, we have an indication of form taken by that non-abstract language: *poetry*. It was Paul de Man (1971) who declared that “poetic language names the void” (p. 18). This “poetic language” need not be construed as the self-conscious self-expression which so often passes for poetry today, or as the product of

... *English poets who grew up on Greek*  
*(I'd have them sing in chorus, cheek to cheek).*  
 (Roethke, “I Knew a Woman,” 1958)

Heidegger, and de Man, seem to imply more the speaking of language itself, that is, of being itself. In such an instance as this—and most artists declare it—the body becomes only the means or the medium “through which a

people speaks being.” Heidegger calls this poetry. In the next section I shall call it myth, and James Hillman refers to it most often as *image*. Such speaking, or expressing, or creating, or acting quite properly has no proper name at all. This creative reality appears to stand opposed—or “beyond,” or “within,” but never quite *here* or *now*—to the reality constructed by the mind to serve the body’s survival and reproductive needs. It is a mythic reality—perhaps one step from the “real”—something Daoism envisions as existing in a continuum of its own with or without us:

There, in the atmosphere of absolute freedom, the images associate, intermingle, and interfuse with one another according to their own law of symbolic evolvment, drawing among themselves and by themselves mythopoeic pictures of Reality. From the standpoint of a Lao Tzu or a Chuang Tzu, these mythopoeic pictures, being essentially archetypal, reflect more faithfully or more fundamentally the true structure of reality than what is afforded by sensation, perception and reason. (Izutsu, 1981, p. 31)

With the mention of “mythopoeic pictures,” we are closing in on the “subject” of myth. Myth is seen here as a creative essence involving, as Heidegger indicates, “a people” and so is not merely a cultural story which has been ideologically evolved into narrative closure. This is myth as narrative *discourse* in “one differentiated world”—a *participation mystique* in which all are sayers and, perhaps, more importantly, all are listeners.

The concept of memory is clearly being opened to two senses: one, the narratives of self-schema in which information is processed to support the illusion of a substantiated, substantial self, and, two, mythic memory—

Mnemosyne—which desubstantiates, desubstantializes, and destabilizes the self for the sake of a mythopoeic language achieving substance:

Mnemosyne, daughter of Sky and Earth, bride of Zeus, in nine nights becomes the Mother of the Muses. Play and music, dance and poetry are of the womb of Mnemosyne, Dame memory. It is plain that the word means something else than merely the psychologically demonstrable ability to retain a mental representation of something that is past. Memory thinks back to what is thought. Yet as the name of the Mother of the Muses, “Memory” does not mean an arbitrary thinking of just anything that might be thought. It harbors and conceals that to which at any given time thought must be given, in everything that essentially unfolds and appeals to us as having being and having-been: Memory, the Mother of the Muses: thinking back to what is to be thought—this is the source and ground of poesy. (Heidegger, 1977, p. 352)

**§Origins of Myth.** This sectional epigraph is meant ironically: The origins of myth cannot be discovered any more than the origins of language or of religion. Yet the past two centuries have seen a great deal of fascinating mythmaking under the ethnocentric rubric of the scientific study of myth, as though to define or narrate the origins of myth can escape from Eliade’s (1976) view that “Myth is ... always an account of a ‘creation’ of one sort or another, as it tells of how something came into being” (p. 23). So that our “scientific inquiry” into myth’s origins is, as always, a mythmaking venture, as is my inquiry into the mythic world behind memory.

Myth has been understood in many ways to many different people. It is religion in the sense of sacred stories for many peoples of the world today. Thanks to the earlier work of C. G. Jung and the massive success of the more

recent work of Joseph Campbell, myth has risen somewhat in the public mind from its former status as a “false tale” to “symbolic truth.” Now ancient or preliterate mythologies are read with delight far from their contexts in the hope of finding the common patterns which will reveal important truths to an educated public grown weary with the monotony of Judaeo-Christianity.

Curriculum Theory has turned to myth in many ways over the past years, encompassing both above definitions. Patriarchy has been found to be “just a myth” even as the myths of “The Goddess” are being accepted in some circles as direct revelation. Is it even possible to indicate an essence to our rhetoric about mythology, much less a meaning or definition? This section attempts both to look at our explanations for myth and our feelings about its place and the “nature” within it. The last section of this chapter aspires to evoke myth in the deepening light of what is known as “archetypal psychology.” If we can comprehend mythic memory more clearly, perhaps we may be able to find a place for it and its effects in our theories and fantasies of educational curriculum.

Mythology is a story, simply that. It is a narrative of events which have been experienced and, as such, it is also at the core of non-narrative writings and speech, including explanation and description. To explain something is to make reference to causes and effects: in other words, to tell the story of genealogies and the unfolding of events through conflict and cooperation.



To describe something is to open the world of adverb and adjective, of simile and metaphor, the subtle colourations of story.

I have been describing a dichotomy of memory, as *techne* and as *memor* to indicate that the territory ascribed to memory once encompassed much more than it now does (chapter 1, Krell). Furthermore, thinking as the product of experience whose purpose is to name and manipulate empirical reality has been set against mythopoeic thinking which creates experience by naming and responding to "invisibles": "This drive to nail with a word a reality of a categorically different existential status from the status of any components of practically usable experience, this unceasing effort to find a name for what is not contingent, gives the constitutive quality to human mythopoeic activities" (Kolakowski, 1972/89, p. 132).

Thirdly, a line has been drawn between reason and intuition, between *logos* and *mythos*. In common parlance, *logos* is acknowledged as real but, in the following passage, Heidegger (1977), for one, grants equal status—at least—to its other: "Historians and philologists, by virtue of a prejudice modern rationalism adopted from Platonism, imagine that *mythos* was destroyed by *logos*. But nothing religious is ever destroyed by logic; it is destroyed only by the god's withdrawal" (p. 352).

Lastly, and perhaps most interestingly, a question has been raised over the shape of time or perhaps one should say over the very reality of time. Time as linear and irreversible is often identified with practical thinking,

looking to the future, whereas time as cyclical or somehow ordered is more often based on metaphysical or mythical thought in which language must transgress its own limitations (Kristeva, 1989). It is fascinating that Bergson and Whitehead, philosophers of duration and process (irreversibility), conceived of, respectively, "the spirit" and "God in three manifestations" as somehow representing the timeless. This is the keynote of all mythic or metaphysical thinkers, according to Kolakowski, though he does not address the important question of whether such thinkers express a need or respond to an intuition:

It does seem in fact that the same common motivation appears in all of them: the desire to arrest physical time by imposing upon it a mythical form of time; that is, one which allows us to see in the mutability of things not only *change*, but also *accumulation*, or allows us to believe that what is past is retained—as far as values are concerned—in what endures; that facts are not merely facts, but are building blocks of a universe of values which it is possible to salvage despite the irreversible flow of events. (pp. 4, 5)

Both kinds of memory, both kinds of cognition, must have existed in the bodies whose minds shared in a *participation mystique* (or, contrarily, the cultural Mind whose separate bodies—members—performed distinct actions in the life-drama of mythic re-membering or commemoration?). The very drawing of differences, however, is an effect of re-cognition, a *defining* kind of attention, so it seems likely there was no awareness of separate modes of awareness. The primitive, as has been said, lives in an active, substantial, mythic universe, likely a universe in which technological memory was merely

understood within—as a little brother or sister—the larger *memor* of the cosmic creation to which s/he was always returning.

Whether or not it was the development of alphabetic<sup>1</sup> script, as Kristeva (1989) has indicated, or simply the worldly power engendered through the calculation of the *logos*, a divorce did take place from the world of myth, and it seems to have appeared almost suddenly in logical Greece. As early as the sixth-fifth century B.C.E., Xenophanes was “profaning” the gods of Homer (Eliade, 1978), something that would have been literally unthinkable in a much earlier time—not because of religious obligation or enforcement, but because, if language was as solid and real as Kristeva indicates above, then so precisely were the gods. One would be strangely perverse to profane powers which were present.

Contrary to the suggestions of Kristeva (1989), there is strong anthropological/archeological evidence for *Homo symbolicus* farther back in time than the Mousterian period of the cave paintings in France (ca. 35,000 B.C.E.). The grand hallucinogenic quality of these cave paintings illustrate the representational or symbol-making faculty of humanity in full operation. It may true that, as Kristeva (1989) has said above: “Considering man as language and putting language in the place of man constitutes the demystifying gesture par excellence” (p. 4), but there is no way to

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<sup>1</sup>Alphabet: *alpha*, *beta*, etc—in order, in a straight line.

demonstrate that the representations of this period included vocalizations, though there are patterned notches in rock and bone, suggesting words.

Thomas Mann's (1934) famous statement about the futility of searching for the origins of humanity, or language, or culture still applies. Yet perhaps it is worth quoting to demonstrate the sense of abyss surrounding all our seeking, the dark and deep abyss of the human psyche itself:

Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?

Bottomless indeed, if—and perhaps only if—the past we mean is the past merely of the life of mankind, that riddling essence of which our own normally unsatisfied and quite abnormally wretched existence form a part; whose mystery, of course, includes our own and is the alpha and omega of all our questions, lending burning immediacy to all we say, and significance to all our striving. For the deeper we sound, the further down into the lower world of the past we probe and press, the more do we find that the earliest foundations of humanity, its history and culture reveal themselves unfathomable. (p. 3)

The unfathomableness of the psyche is itself a “mystifying” phenomena, as is the earlier suggestion of Lévi-Strauss that language—objects signifying—“could only have been born in a single stroke” (Kristeva, 1989, p. 46). Man as the measure of all things may be demystified by considering him a product of language, but it is a powerfully mystifying, even eerie, suggestion that humanity awoke one morning to find itself within an utterly new world of representation. Did our distant semi-human ancestors suddenly find themselves with the need and ability to sit around their fires at night and spin narratives about the day's hunting and gathering adventures? Perhaps it was the momentous occasion of first mastering that strange and

dangerous dancer, fire, that first caused the hair on the backs of our ancestors to stand on end with the awakened sense of the uncanny. Or perhaps some extraterrestrial phenomenon—such as the unexplained black monolith from the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968)—appeared to nudge humanity into beginning its representational journey into high technology.

The genus *Homo* now appears to go back at least four million years during which time its members diffused across the planet from Africa, learning to use (but hardly improving upon) crude stone tools (Campbell, 1990). The first indications of symbolic thought appear, however, with *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*. Joseph Campbell (1976) hints at another possible explanation for the origin at about 60,000 B.C.E. of *Homo symbolicus*, the producer—and product—of “signifying objects”:

We now begin to find burials, and at one important site, at Shanidar in northern Iraq, there has been recently discovered a cave containing a number of burials, in one of which the body had been laid to rest on a bier of evergreen boughs overspread with flowers, the pollens of which could still be traced, and all of which have turned out to be plants with hallucinogenic properties. (p. 46)

Furthermore, beneath the bones of this particular male were found the bones of two females and a child (Campbell, 1990). Burial alone suggests some sort of belief in an afterlife, and the extra burials even hint at a type of suttee sacrifice. It seems at least worth considering the possibility that participational symbolic consciousness “awoke” through the mystical effects from the ingestion of hallucinogenic plants. The grave may have been that of

a shaman whose visions, "archaic techniques of ecstasy" and "mantic journeys" have been suggested as prototypes of all religious activity and possibly all representational activity whatsoever (Eliade, 1964).

Burial also suggests ritual farewells and the possibility of the mourning which attends such things. Time and again, from individuals widely separated in space and time, mourning has been cited as the origin of remembering as *memor*—the mindfulness which creates (Kristeva, 1987; Dunne, 1988). Krell (1990) says that "mourning and memory are scions of the same semantic vine" (p. 284), but then goes on to wonder, Derrida-like, whether there can be any mourning but "mourning in default" (p. 284):

The very linguistic multivalence of the word *mémoire* ... whether masculine or feminine, singular or plural, preserves the cryptic quality of mourning. . . . Mourning does not (allow) rest. It pushes ahead. The desire to think and speak *in memory of* a departed friend is the intense desire for and affirmation of the future. It engages the bereaved in an alliance, not for purposes of progress or power, but toward an uncertain future to which one nevertheless must say "yes." (p. 288)

Krell writes enigmatically but suggests that imagining may be a *response* to remembering and Campbell (1976, 1990) indulges in free speculation, but each in their own way may be opening out the possibility that mythopoeic mindfulness need not have appeared with the vocalizations or written markings we generally refer to as language. After the logical Xenophanes, it was widely assumed that myth could only exist as language and, specifically, as narrative, though the narratives could be depicted as icons or in art or performed in ritual or drama. When the scientific study of

myth was begun, Max Müller declared myth to be the result of what he called a "disease of language." He referred to this as homonymy and indicated it with the example of names losing referents and being mistaken for deities, as in the formula *nomina = numina* (Eliade, 1976).

Language cannot refer to anything outside of itself, it is now generally conceded (Kristeva, 1989), but, on the other hand, its very structure and rhythms may have evolved from *actions* done in response to the sudden awe of *memor*. Ritual dance is a widely supported candidate as the primary *response*<sup>1</sup>—whether it is conceived as group elaborations worked out over time or the possessed gyrations of an individual shamanic trance (or, perhaps, rituals mimicking sacred shamanic trance movements). This idea still has wide support, especially among anthropologists, who understand ritual to antedate myth as narrative. Among the more famous ritualists are Sir James George Frazer (1890/1959) and the classicist Jane Ellen Harrison (1903/1991). Others following this principal but who judge iconography (often of rituals) whose meaning has been forgotten to be the source of most mythic narratives include the Swiss classicist, Walter Burkert (1985), and the poet Robert Graves (1960/80). All of the ritualists, according to Eliade (1976), "take for granted that the fundamental element of religion and of human culture is the act *done by man*, not the *story of divine activity*" (p. 19).

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<sup>1</sup>"So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing."  
—T. S. Eliot, "East Coker" III, 128. *Four Quartets* (1944).

The main import of presenting such a point of view is to indicate that myth and narrative need not be identified. When I suggest that there may be myths concealed in memory, I do not mean we are creating our stories within the structure of, say, Gilgamesh's existential quest or the battle of Marduk and Tiamat, but that the "empty place" within memory may refer to a sort of Dionysian immersion in rituals of *participation mystique* in which the self and its specific memory were lost, but not, perhaps, in what Heidegger called the "ecstasis of oblivion" (above). I am suggesting that Kristeva's "solid" world of language within which the self was conceived may well have already been within a *pre-conceptual* world of mythic realism. "Mythical realism" postulates the aesthetics of imaginative perception to be actually found "outside," in nature, not in the mind or "unconscious" (Boer & Kugler, 1977).

"Pre-conceptual" has, of course, become a near *verboden* in this postmodern era where the authority of language has been given its due. The pre-conceptual is inconceivable, of course, like Lacan's real. Kirby's prenarrative structures, structuralism itself, and even Whitehead's eternal objects and Jung's archetypes have attempted to indicate the formative tendencies which affect language but seem to reside in some deeper natural substratum or, perhaps, firmament.

Archetypes may be *imagined* as inspirational telos, or *remembered* as pure potential. When the archetypes manifest in language, they are



experienced as real: "The primitive mentality," writes Jung (Kerényi & Jung, 1949), "does not *invent* myths, it *experiences* them" (p. 101).

The similarity appears more than just passing among Plato's world of ideas, Whitehead's eternal objects, and Jung's archetypes. None of the above can be revealed. In fact, normal reality *conceals* their greater reality. All are beyond the reach of memories, as such, but *anamnesis* takes us toward Plato's ideas or forms. As hidden movers, each—as has been mentioned with regard to Whitehead's eternal objects—is a *present absence* (Derrida, 1978). It may be in this latter sense that such "hiddens" provide the only trace of meaning or referent within a language network based only on the differentiation of signification. Assuming no transcendental signifieds, Foucault has indicated that language can only speak towards this absence:

The presence and absence of the gods, their withdrawal and immanence, defined the central and empty space for European culture where there appeared, bound in a single interrogation, the finitude of man and the return of time. The nineteenth century is commonly thought to have discovered the historical dimension; it was able to pen history on the basis of the *circle*, the spatial form that negates time, the form in which the gods manifest their arrival and flight and men manifest their return to their ground of finitude. More than simply an event that affected our emotions, the death of God profoundly influenced our language; the silence that replaced its source remains impenetrable. . . . Language thus assumes a sovereign position; it rises as coming from elsewhere, from a place of which no one can speak, but it is a work only if, in ascending to its proper discourse, it speaks in the direction of this absence. (In Taylor, 1987, p. xvii.)

The "death" of the all-consuming God which gave an understanding of meaning to all speech and writing has re-opened the avenues to what was once called pagan sources of meaning. Whether Jungian archetypes are

simply dismissed as biological instincts made conscious or if they are merited as the structures that open the way into myth and ritual, thus language, they still sound very similar to the gods experienced by various pagan peoples.

Eliade (1976) describes myths with seeming approval as possibly preceding language as archetypal expressions. He explains that "myths are for Jung the expressions of *a primordial psychic process that may even precede the advent of the human race*. Together with symbols, myths are the most archaic structures of the psychic life." Campbell (1976), who has derived much of the background of his heroic ontology from Jung, agrees with the primacy of the archetypes, but points out the term derives from the *Elementargedanken*, "elementary ideas" of Adolf Bastian (1826-1905). He also points out that such structures are not original to the West:

The Hindus, like Adolf Bastian, have noticed and named the distinction between *Völker-* and *Elementargedanken*, ethnic and elementary ideas. Their terms for the same are *dési* and *màrga*. *Dési* means "that which is local, provincial," and refers to those forms of myth and ritual that we recognize as culturally shaped, and whose areas of origin can be mapped. *Màrga*, on the other hand, means "path or track, trail of animal, to be followed," and this is precisely what is implied by C. G. Jung's term, "the archetypes of the unconscious." (1976, p. 59)

Such a formative concept—which is claimed not to be—is obviously of vast importance. In the next section, James Hillman simply personifies such vague structuring agents as "Gods" (1975a, 1975b, 1981). Those who have worked with aesthetic interpretation or dealt with human expression at all

have found such structures emerging from behind the grand diversity of human creativity almost inevitably (Frye, 1957; May, 1975; Eliot, A., 1976; Doll, M. A., 1988; Neumann, 1989). Yet to recognize such patterning is not the same as the scientific recognition of an actual mythical or metaphysical agent of such patterns, as Kolakowski (1972/89) emphatically states:

The presence of this intention does not guarantee the existence of the referents. It is only evidence of a need, alive in culture, that that to which the intention refers should be present. But this presence cannot in principle be the object of proof, because the proof-making ability is itself a power of the analytical mind, technologically oriented, which does not extend beyond its tasks. The idea of proof, introduced into metaphysics, arises from a confusion of two different sources of energy active in man's conscious relation to the world: the technological and the mythical. (p. 2)

Writing about such imagined structures as archetypes, he also points out, must be more literary—more mythopoeic—than literal:

Jung and Eliade have attempted to demonstrate that individual myths are locally and historically determined particularizations of that myth which makes up the common archetypal pool of mythical consciousness, although it manifests itself only in culturally designated specifics. These attempts themselves appear to form part of mythopoeic endeavors, and it is difficult to imagine how one could endow them with the status of a hypothesis. They are perhaps worthy of our attention as ecumenical efforts, that is, as elements of an endeavor which remains within mythical consciousness; but, it seems, they are unlikely to succeed as an effort which attempts to make mythical consciousness the object of scientific reflection only. (p. 8)

The structural anthropology developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966) has seldom been questioned as to its hard-worked scientific base. Yet, he, too, indicates a pre-linguistic *something*. His later work recognizes that the structure of myth—"raw" myth—is closer to music than to language (Eliade,

1987). His earlier work had noted that the mind seems to work with concepts or with images, but rarely with both simultaneously. Here he is interpreted as noting, as did Kristeva (1989), the substantiality of mythic thought: "The basic characteristic of mythical thought consists in its concreteness: it works with *signs* which have the peculiar character of lying *between* images and concepts. That is, signs resemble images in that they are concrete, as concepts are not; however, their power of reference also likens them to concepts" (Eliade, 1976, p. 22).

This "betweenness" of myth draws away from myth as story only. It implies having an intention of its own. Between some sort of primordial chaos, or Lacan's real, and our differentiated conceptual consciousness, myth seems to have interceded—suddenly—with spontaneous responses (actions) or representations (images or *substantial* names). Alexander Eliot (1976) sums it up—poetically—in this way: "Although it cannot be defined, myth may be pictured in a way. It is the glistening interface between consciousness and creative chaos" (p. 282).

As we move to the less scientifically-constrained Far East of Daoism,<sup>1</sup> we find the image being described as the limit of the knowable, but that in no way prevents a mythopoeic attempt to evoke the "real" of the "No-Image":

The No-Image is here represented by the metaphysical Nothing, the Imageless as Lao Tzu himself calls it. The Imageless is formless. Absolutely no form is visible. But from the very midst of this darkness

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<sup>1</sup>Corrected pronunciation of "Taoism."

of formlessness, as if by dint of the natural law of self-articulation, there come out visible forms, at first vague and indistinct, but turning soon clear and distinct. As soon as these forms become distinctly discernible, they are reflected in the mind and produce there mythopoeic images which, from then on, follow their own course in *mythopoesis*. That which is indicated by the formula: "From No-Image to Image" is thus in Taoism a symbolic or mythic reproduction of a metaphysical vision of Being, in which one witnesses the primordial Nothing as it goes on producing interminably out of itself images of its own, which, spreading out in all directions, finally establish themselves as the phenomenal world. (Izutsu, 1981, p. 7)

Though language is forbidden to go beyond itself (Kristeva has even indicated that idealism—and other forms of transcendentalism, such as subjectivity—is a "disease of language," or, at least, a creation of it), I am introducing the mythopoeic possibility that myth, in itself, may consist of actions and words which derive from a peculiarly liminal area of awareness which Izutsu describes by the term "image," an area with experienced imaginal forms and presences. About archetypes, nothing concrete can be finally known. About Daoism's "Nothing," nothing can be concretely known. The mythic image, however, seems amenable to experience, perhaps even the substantial experience of a people, who could then express its reality in narrative discourse—without the moral imperatives of narrative closure.

This world of images is not unknown to us. Far from it. We experience it nightly in the shifting landscapes of our dreams with their preternatural lighting which seems, somehow, to illuminate from within. Memory flashbacks seem often not to have the slightest vestige of story, but, instead, to present themselves as inexplicable imagery—unconnected even to the

events unfolding within the narratives of our daily lives. Images without the hermeneutic of narrative can bring us to the brink: They threaten to disperse consciousness with the images of our identities appearing only as other flickering presentations on the verge of dis-appearing as chaotically as they had appeared. The world of images must indeed be the "strange and terrible" phenomena of the beyond of language, as Heidegger (1987, p. 171) has described. Without naming, without narrating, such unbridled imagery must often have seemed what we would call a hallucinogenic nightmare. It suggests what Alexander Eliot called above "creative chaos," and—in this god-infested dreamtime—only perhaps the shared desperation of the discourse of mythopoeic tales could provide the ordering and the *imagination* to contain the images.

This seems to be the primary reason why James Hillman declares mythology to be creative and not enclosed. He suggests that "mythical fictions stimulate imagination. They generate cosmological imaginings and further the soul's speculative freedom," and he quotes Whitehead from *Process and Reality* (p. 115) in this regard: "'Imagination finds its easiest freedom among the higher categories of eternal objects'" (1989, p. 221).

So, to return to the theme of this section, the origin of myth, we find the ordering of images may not have appeared until myth found its *logos*. The *logos* of "mythology" is the part of the word which meant "tale" or "story," in Homer and the early Greek poets. "Myth," itself, derives from *muthos*, "word"

(Levin, 1960, pp. 103, 104). From this perspective, a myth is neither a fable, folktale, ritual afterthought, description of divinity, nor even a narrative in itself, though it has since been considered all these things and more. An overview from the 1960s indicates this riot of opinion:

The first problem, then: there is no agreement as to what the myth and ritual pattern actually is. Not only is this true of students of literature who must, after all, take their materials from the anthropologists, archaeologists, pre-historians, psycho-analysts, historians of religion, folklorists, and classicists, but it is equally true of the very experts in those fields. I know from personal observation that Frankfort turned livid at the sound of Frazer's name, Rose savages Graves, Graves gores Jung, Guthrie deplores Cornford, and bound volumes of *The Journal of American Folklore* are thrown at Raglan and Hyman for criticizing Thompson. As a matter of fact, no myth and ritual pattern as such exists or ever existed in any real sense; it is a modern, scholarly reconstruction of diverse materials drawn from divergent sources. Moreover, and this is even more exasperating, there is no agreement as to the meaning of myth itself. To Whalley, a myth "...is a direct metaphysical statement beyond science. . . . Myth has as its purpose, its source and end, revelation", to Watts, it is the *philosophia perennis*; to Wheelright, "it is...a set of depth-meanings of perduring significance within a widely shared perspective", to Graves, it is "...the reduction to narrative shorthand of ritual mime performed on public festivals" or, contrariwise, the antique story of the White Goddess, or, even more contrariwise, politico-religious history; and as a final example, myths are "...mistaken explanations of phenomena...founded on ignorance and misapprehension they are always false, for were they true, they would cease to be myths," and this, ironically enough, was Frazer's opinion. (Weisinger, 1960, pp. 135, 136)

It seems to me we have heard enough of the definitions of myth from the outside, from our academic perspective. The narratives of mythology give the impression of the ordering of experience through storying. To further gain insight into the *image* within myth itself, however, I feel we need the imagistic perspective of what is called "archetypal psychology."

**§Remembering the Soul.** The leading archetypalist, James Hillman, applies the term “myth” with different emphases in different places. As story, he employs the myths of Ancient Greece, since he understands our cultural roots (and thus our psyche) to derive especially from that region which supplies the paradigms and guidance in the work of abnormal psychology:

Following Jung along this path is the main work of archetypal therapy. Much of what I have been attempting at Eranos since 1966 has been along these lines. We have looked at the myths and the implications for abnormal psychology—of Eros and Psyche, of Dionysos, of such figures as the puer aeternus, Saturn the senex, the child and Hades in the Underworld. In these different examples we saw that the pathological is inherent to the mythical. . . . Our deepest intention has been to move psychopathology, the basis of the field, from a positivistic nineteenth-century system of mind and its disorders to a non-agnostic, mythopoeic, psychology of the archetypes. (Hillman, 1983a, p. 11)

Hillman's psychology of the archetypes is openly mythic and does not even attempt the scientific hypotheses of Eliade or Jung. He makes the move away from a rational ordering of concepts or a rational ordering of memory to *explain* psyche or myth, which, as Kolakowski indicated, are not subject to explanation. Instead, he declares that all our rationalizing works within the substantial reality of language, as Kristeva (1989) said above about primitive humanity. The archetypes act upon a people's mythopoeic responsiveness to create mythos through them. The sounds produced name a “solid” reality, and this reality continues to create words through differentiation, not forgetting their mythic origin. If, at least in its origin, myth



was the word of words, the concept of the concept, or the meaning of the sound—as *mu* is to *muthos*—then it must have been a datum of direct experience, a revelation. This does not imply, however, a revelation of pure godhead or pure form. According to Hillman (1979a), as with Kristeva, the “form” and the “word” are identical:

It is as if the archetypal material chooses its own descriptive terms as one aspect of its self-expression. This would mean that ‘naming’ is not a nominalistic activity, but realistic indeed, because the name takes us into its reality. We might even submit that there is an archetypal selective factor involved in the invention of terms. Let us call this an archetypal semantics or phonetics on which archetypal hermeneutics is based. After all, to lead archetypal significance out of the language of psychology suggests that the significance is already ‘there’ in the words, their roots or their sounds. (p. 25)

It appears he is saying that “archetypal substance” gave forth language in one form or another, yet Hillman would agree with Heidegger (1987) that “It is in words and language that things come into being and are” (p. 13). Hillman (1989a) declares the pre-existence of archetypes, but such archetypes have no form in themselves. Even a *via negativa*, he implies, does not promote a relationship with the formless: “We may assert an absence of form, but can we imagine this absence, this formlessness? The world egg and eros (the generative joiner) are inherent in Chaos and Night, and even the Titans have names” (p. 222).

In this way, it seems, the early responses to awakening in a dreamworld of chaotic images were language-like representations: the

musical forms suggested by Lévi-Strauss, or the representations of artwork or dance. As as been suggested elsewhere (Derrida, 1978), such representations were not re-presentations at all, but actual *presentations* because their articulation was the thing, in itself, for the first time. To remember deeper than our own representations (including ourselves) is to find ourselves in the “creative chaos” of dreams: “I do not consider dreaming as a piece of the psyche like a textbook chapter listed along with memory, perception, emotion, and the like. Dreaming is the psyche itself doing its soul-work” (Hillman, 1979a, p. 201). Psyche or soul, according to Hillman, is that very archetypal substance, which, like Whitehead’s eternal objects, is eternal and “surrounding” life. The soul—a central term “revitalized” in archetypal psychology—never leaves its bottomless depth in “death,” yet, in its striving into life, “Soul seeks to understand itself beyond itself” (1989a, 216). We, as representations in the world, cannot “fathom” the soul-work of dream, but we may experience it as dream or as mystical participation:

We do not understand enough of this soul-work because we are not altogether in its place; we are not “dead,” not all psyche, once we have left the underworld and returned to our various other soul parts as listed in the textbook. (Hillman, 1979a, p. 201)

So language may constitute reality in Heidegger’s sense and conceal the real, in Lacan’s sense, but it is the dreamlike—horrifying or exalting—quality of myths which seem to exist as “glistening interface” between the underworld of soul (the real?) and our daylight reality. In this light, myths are not the creations of words but, in a twisted sense, the words

are the form of myth. Whether the "word" made reference to a memory of an experience or was, in fact, a spontaneous conjuration followed by memory, the original mythic experience must have included a representation of an apperception: an *image*. Without the centrality of image, archetypal psychology with its emphasis on seeing-through is simply another mode of denial, as Hillman says: "My *via negativa*, though different in content because of its call of soul-making, the vivification of imagination, and the restoration of the Gods, still retained as method the critical, skeptical analysis such as we find in bare existentialism, linguistic philosophy, operationalism, and deconstruction theory" (1989a, p. 216).

The image, however, is considered the central datum of experience in the unbordered field of mythic psychology:

An archetypal image is psychologically "universal" because its effect amplifies and de-personalizes ... such an image is universal because it resonates with collective trans-empirical importance. . . . And the universals problem for psychology is not whether they exist, where, and how they participate in particulars, but rather whether a personal individual event can be recognized as bearing essential and collective importance. (Hillman, 1983a, p. 11)

The image as carrier of dream as well as of myth is a multi-sensory impression revealed primarily through emotion. But though the image is understood to have archetypal content, even it is not solid or final, some sort of ultimate particle. Instead of an image being trivialized through some dream interpretation or extended as one item on the plotline of a narrative, the image is instead merely the surface appearance of an emotion. The

more closely the image is examined, the more images are revealed—like fractals within fractals. This is what Hillman (1979a) means when he says that the mythic image only opens and that the image is all we can know of what is beneath it:

All that we have claimed for the dream cannot be established by experience or be grounded in myth. Myth doesn't ground, it opens. We remain in the perspective of depth, with nothing more reliable under our feet than this depth itself. We take depth psychology literally at its word, because depth is a metaphor that has no base. . . . Image is psyche and cannot revert except to its own imagining. (p. 200)

The image is understood to be anterior to the concept (including the conception of "image"). The very word, conception, refers not to a birth from within but is from the Latin verb, *concupere*: to take to oneself (Morris, 1982), as though the concept were a sort of personalized "after-image" of unplaced, impersonal experience of the image, in itself. Archetypal psychology, then, though never defining myth per se, would likely consider myth to be an expression of the *experience* of the supra-personal image. Myth is the name of that experience, taken within, as it were—subjected (not projected).

Mythology is the narrative of such names:

When we think mythologically about pathologizing, we could say, as some have, that the "world of the Gods" is anthropomorphic, an imitative projection of ours, including our pathologies. But one could start as well from the other side, the *mundus imaginalis* of the archetypes (or Gods), and say that our "secular world" is at the same time mythical, an imitative projection of theirs, including their pathologies. What the Gods show in an imaginal realm of myth is reflected in our imagination as fantasy. Our fantasies reflect theirs, our behavior only mimetic to theirs. We can imagine nothing or perform nothing that is not already given by the archetypal imagination of the

Gods. . . . Since their *infirmetas* is essential to their complete configuration, it follows that our individual completion requires our pathologizings. (Hillman, 1980, pp. 3, 4)

This implies that our "wholeness" cannot be whole, drawn together as it has been from a plurality of archetypes. Our narrative selves are made from much earlier narratives of the gods, each expressive of the inarticulate grandeur and madness (from our "all too human" perspective?) of a particular archetypal configuration. Each configuration contains a desirable face and an undesirable shadow, and we each participate in many such configurations, according to Hillman. No configuration is unique unto itself but only seems so because of its differentiation from others—and all participate in each other: so like language.

We know of such archetypes—such "Gods"—from their imaginative expression in mythic tales. Today, of course, myth means little more, in general parlance, than illusion. Archetypal psychology would likely accept such a definition. It is difficult to shed light on the archetypal definition of myth when the very term, "definition", is rooted in the Latin *de*: off + *finis*: end, boundary (Morris). To define is to set boundaries, which myth as word has already begun and which myth seeks to carry us through. If the project of archetypal psychology is to "see through" the mythology to the image, then this boundary must be one that is permeable. Myth, it may be extrapolated, is illusion, as is the substance of all language.

The mythic is everpresent and all-pervasive because language, itself, is a construction of images. One has only to delve into the origins of words to discover something perceived, or something *done* behind the source of the sound made to indicate the image (or the idea of the image). Today we accept words literally, within the singular self. This may be as the result of Kristeva's alphabet subjectivity or because we have been subsumed in the Western/Northern fantasy (Hillman, 1983b) of only a singular knowable—God—which we now imagine to be isolated “inside” of us, our chief cultural ailment, according to Hillman (1983b). The “outside” world is treated logically and as objectively real, but impersonal.

It may be impossible for us to decipher a “prelogical mentality” (Lévy-Bruhl, 1926/85, p. 78, p. 295) when we are creations of *logos*. A return to animal *participation mystique* in nature without speech would be the end of humanity, but within the web of language, especially academic language, primordial images become obscured and we believe our speech to be more concrete than its referents. We become prisoners of our own device. Is this because we believe literally in the image ‘I’?

Even the continental philosophies of language—such as the linguistics section above—seem to have expunged the Dionysian excess of emotion from all our conceptualizing, from all our imaging. Whether language is seen as an abstract representation of real referents or a system of differences referring only to itself, it seems to have forgotten the emotional

necessity of bringing together fragments of feeling to create a "moment," what Whitehead called the concrescence of the occasion. Hillman refers directly to Whitehead in a startling passage calling for the mythically real moment:

I wish Whitehead were still around to take down structuralism and the deconstruction that follows it, because they continue this indifference to the actual occasions of the phenomenal world—this image here that is immediately presented and not some other—reducing what is as *fons et origo* to abstract structural relations or troping it transformatively into something else. Anything can be anything. Polysemous has come to mean polyethylene, polyurethane, utter plasticity—Proteus become a monster, the changeability of form become a mockery of form. All relations: a web of endless intricate relations—and no spider. (1989a, p. 225)

The spider here may be the response, the overwhelming emotional response, to the presumably sudden and direct experience of a polytheistic *real*, a phantasma of images in which "I" was as minor a player as the background scream in a nightmare. This response and the memory of it may be the beginning of mythic awareness—certainly more *memor* than *techne*.

Early mythographers began their investigations with the powerful monotheistic assumption of the self. Everything that was not a product of immediate perception was understood to have no objective existence, and the only possible *a priori* was the arithmetical structure of reason, itself. Mythic explanations and divine presences were and are understood to be mere products of imagination projected onto the environment. Roberts Avens (1980), for one, suggests we have it reversed, that imagination is a sort of sixth sense which includes all the others: Rather than projecting images "out" in some sort of holographic wish-fulfillment, we language-

beings, instead, receive them “in,” like a wind-chime receives wind, and we express such images as the chime uses its form for music: “For quite possibly the primitive had no ‘insides’ to begin with. Perhaps ... instead of being a *camera obscura* (something like a box with one single, very small aperture), he was an Aeolian harp, or wind harp” (Avens, p. 26).

We today, especially in the West/North, continue the internalization of imagination, but Avens (1980) avers we are mistaken to think we have repressed it: “This is not to imply that the Westerner has lost or succeeded in eradicating the imaginative power of his soul: imagination survives resplendently not only in art but also in the pathetic entanglements of mundane life” (p. 11).

James Hillman (1986), too, considers “civilization and its discontents” and the psychopathologies of daily life to be where lived myth has fled:

If the Gods have become diseases, then these forms of chronic disorder are the Gods in disguise; they are occulted in these misshapen, inhuman forms, and our seeing through to them there—in all forms of chronic disorder in ourselves and our city—is a grounding act of culture. The education of sensitivity begins right here in trying to see through the manifestations of time into the eternal patterns within time. We may regard the discontents of civilization as if they are the fundamentals of culture. (p. 20)

In fact, Hillman insists that recognizing the “metaphorical necessity” of seeing through our inwardness is archetypal psychology’s “world mission.” He understands that, metaphorically, “inner” and “down” are the places to soul-search according to Jung’s well-known dictum: “The gods have become



diseases; Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus, and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room." (CW 13 §54):

Human awareness fails in its comprehension not because of original sin or personal neurosis or because of the obstinacy of the objective world to which it is supposedly opposed. Human awareness fails, according to a psychology based on soul, because the soul's metaphorical nature has a suicidal necessity, an underworld affiliation, a 'morbism', a destiny—different from dayworld claims—which makes the psyche fundamentally unable to submit to the *hubris* of an egocentric notion of subjectivity as achievement, defined as cognition, conation, intention, perception, and so forth.

Thus, that sense of weakness, inferiority, mortification, masochism, darkness, and failure is inherent to the *mode* of metaphor itself which defeats conscious understanding as a control over phenomena. Metaphor, as the soul's *mode* of logos, ultimately results in that abandonment to the given which approximates mysticism.

The metaphorical transposition—this 'death-dealing' move that at the same time awakens consciousness to a sense of soul—is at the heart of archetypal psychology's mission, its world intention. (Hillman, 1983a, p. 22)

This notion of an "unconscious"—which is consciously revealed in "morbid" fantasies—is unlike Freud's repressions and very different from Jung's collective archetypes. In this vision the soul reaches into the dayworld through us, yet it remains steeped in the beyond of death. This *metaphoric* unconscious sounds much more like that suggested by Lacan (1977) who speaks of our subjective mode of knowing simultaneously creating an un-knowing, so our saying is always divisive and our knowledge never totalizable: The light imparted by our speech must also create a shadow. It is this metaphoric and metamorphic moving into shadow that reveals Hillman's (1983a) path to a shady sort of enlightenment:

The perspective darkens with a deeper light. But this metaphorical perspective also kills: it brings about the death of naive realism, naturalism, and literal understanding. The relation of soul to death—a theme running all through archetypal psychology—is thus a function of the psyche's metaphorical activity. The metaphorical mode does not speak in declarative statements or explain in clear contrasts. It delivers all things to their shadows. (p. 21)

Hillman's journey into a deeper light is a sort of *via negativa*. To penetrate the security of "self-esteem" and comfortable ego-structures (the literalized mythos of conceptual belief) is to leave us exposed to all the hidden aspects of daily life. Death is that darkside with which we would prefer not to deal, but which is always present in the further reaches of what Hillman calls soul. Myth, as the word, may live us through it or myth, as the word, may guide us back to those primordial soul-images. It must be clearly stated that Hillman's "seeing through" is neither merely a glimpse of oblivion nor the seeing through to the light of *the* "primordial soul-image." Hillman (1989a) indicates that our "soul-searching" brings "soul-making" to the world:

We practice an alchemical metaphysics: "account for the unknown in terms of the more unknown." Notice here that this further unknown beyond is a *more*; at the same time that emptying is going on, so is filling. In the act of deconstruction there is constructive aim. (p. 220)

**§Archetypal Mythology.** To understand archetypal psychology's use of myth, the "archetypal" label cannot be left out. Myth's narrative fabrications can be slowed, dispersed, or deconstructed to see through to the primordial

images composing them. For it is such archetypal images that reveal a god or the flow of a mythologem.<sup>1</sup>

Myth in itself—the mythologem—is not story with a beginning, middle, and end. Mary Doll (1988) indicates that myths are not closed narrative, stories which end with a moral lesson: “Myths, we could say, have a curious Beckettian quality. As stories that never come to an end, myths build upon basic patterns, giving an opportunity to create endings and to re-create beginnings” (p. 1). Mythologems become embedded in expanding mythologies, which use them freely in all sorts of stories which, again, become enlarged or adapted in the retelling. Homer’s works are neither myths nor mythologies but they encompass both. It may be the narrative structure and the later development of expository prose which bury the mythologem deeper and deeper in the archeological substrata of psyche. In this way powerful mythic images become appropriated by forces seeking only social indoctrination. Mythology is perverted into ideology, and an image of the wheel of life or its reverse, the wheel of remembering or creativity which cycles the opposite way—both swastikas<sup>2</sup>—can be transmogrified into the wheel of death and horror: the Nazi swastika.

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<sup>1</sup>A mythologem is a recurring mythic motif, which, like an image or a god, is subject to further dispersal and greater depth upon close study.

<sup>2</sup>Sanskrit: *svastika*, a sign of good luck (Morris, 1982)

Jung considered the archetype to become hidden as mythic stories gained in complexity and in the shifting of perspective. Elaboration increased conscious objectivity and supported social orders but also disguised the memory of the primal mythic image:

Another well-known expression of the archetypes is myth and fairy-tale. But here too we are dealing with forms that have received a specific stamp and have been handed down through long periods of time. The term "archetype" thus applies only indirectly to the "representations collectives," since it designates only those psychic contents which have not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration and are therefore an immediate datum of psychic experience. In this sense, there is a considerable difference between the archetype and the historical formula that has evolved. Especially on the higher levels of esoteric teaching the archetypes appear in a form that reveals quite unmistakably the critical and evaluating influence of conscious elaboration. Their immediate manifestation, as we encounter it in dreams and visions, is much more individual, less understandable, and more naïve than in myths for example. (CW 9 §1:6)

Even in myths, and by this Jung means tales, the archetype has been altered by "conscious elaboration." If the early myths were expressions of transpersonal archetypal experience which mythologies collapsed into narratives, then "fairy tales" are even more so (Miller, 1976), and so on into the matrices of the novel, expository prose, and political propaganda.

The notion of "conscious elaboration" becomes somewhat curious when *mythos* is understood as "word." How is it that the form of the original archetype can be disguised through the increasing complexity of the "word" which first brought consciousness?

Here we come to the creative force of archetypal psychology: imagination. To imagine is to do just that—elaborate an image, imagine it

into separate constituencies and give a face to the archetype. Imagination is understood, not as another human faculty such as Jung's intuition, but as the formless prime mover, similar to Whitehead's "creativity," from which both myth and language spring:

Language, like myth, originates in imagination. . . . It is for this reason that *naming* must be regarded as the very essence of the mythical process of imagination. . . . It is impossible to ascertain the age of language and myth since their origins lie in pre-history. Nevertheless it would seem very plausible ... that they are twin creatures, springing from the same tendency to see reality imagistically or symbolically. Both language and myth are part of the same basic mental activity. (Avens, 1980, p. 88)

In claiming Jung as a forerunner of post-modernity, Casey (1987a) suggests that myth is drawn from "the transpersonal foundation of imagination and language" (p. 105), as suggested by Saussure and Chomsky: "Language is no more a matter of an individual speech-act (*la parole*) than primordial images are affairs of the isolated ego" (pp. 104, 105).

Conversely, it seems that imagination when employed by the animal survival drive—order, growth, reproduction—may also be the hidden force behind the definitions and divisions we have made throughout the centuries, at least according to the French historiographer, Paul Veyne (1988):

I do not at all mean to say that imagination will bring future truths to light and that it should reign; I mean, rather, that truths are already products of the imagination and that the imagination has always governed. It is imagination that rules, not reality, reason, or the ongoing work of the negative.

This imagination is not the faculty we know psychologically and historically by the same name. It does not, through dream or prophecy, expand the fishbowl in which we live. On the contrary, it

creates boundaries. Outside the bowl is nothing, not even future truths. (p. xii)

We have the seeming contradiction that myths awakened consciousness with the expression of the apperception of primordial images and that myths proceeded to disguise those primordial images. How is this possible?

Hillman would respond, I believe, that the archetypes are revealed in myths in which the presence of gods and goddesses (as the face of the archetype) is central. As narratives elaborated, the deities became symbols and soon disappeared from the world altogether, becoming constituents of the non-realm called the "unconscious." The mesh of the masks multiplied to appear as a solid barrier. The only myth surviving is that of the "real," the "literal," and the objective sensory world. Behind it all is the One, i.e., God, and stumbling around within it is the self, the representational 'I', which is considered to be singular. Narcissistic narrative is this mythos which serves only to augment "self-esteem" or support ego-structures. In *The New Polytheism* (1981), David L. Miller warns:

It is not that anything is "wrong" with narrative expression. Nor do I wish to take back anything I have said recommending attention to it. . . . The danger I see lies rather in how one views a story or how a story is used. Narrative form is no better than abstract ideation if it is used ideologically, that is, for ego-security. This is particularly important to note in a time when story-form enjoys a more than passing popularity in philosophy, theology, and literary criticism. (p. 17)

Today, as Miller indicates, narrative form has been taken so literally as to be transmuted into the dogma of empirically verifiable scientific discourse

and into the anti-mythic, anti-aesthetic, self-enclosed world of academia.

Furthermore, we believe we are our stories, often to our confusion in the face of erratic experience, as literary art often reveals. Miller continues that

if stories are believed to be a crutch that help ego hobble back into a modicum of control ... then the stories of the Gods may be as disappointing as the social ideologies and the monotheistic theologies which replaced them. Enthusiasm for narrative-form can become just one more idolatry" (p. 18).

Archetypal psychology has looked to myths and mythic tales to help us break from our self-enclosure. According to Hillman, we have turned our back on the multiple forms of the *anima mundi* (world-soul), and, as a result of pathologizing the gods within, all we know of the world is from the obsessive study of ourselves—so like the deluded occupants in Plato's cave analogy studying their own shadows. We create "literal self-delusions" today so we can feel proud and secure in our singular "I." Hillman indicates this "paranoid drive toward unified meaning" is nothing but the *senex*—fearful old age— archetype in action. Archetypal psychology abandons such a drive, and Hillman suggests there is "merely the method of *epistrophe* and a consistent attitude, but no attempt at overall coherence" (1981, p. 132).

Hillman has indicated the development of this totalized and totalizing self may have derived from the Enlightenment inversion of the objective monotheism of the West, perhaps another reason why the mythic path is seen as a "deeper light" and not enlightenment. This polytheistic path should have interest for anyone wishing to avoid a totalized ideology or even a

scientific theocracy. It may have implications as widespread in curriculum as background for a multicultural curriculum (Edgerton, 1992) or for world-order studies (Smith, 1990).

The method of engaging the archetypal memory, called "epistrophe" by Hillman above, is a far cry from autobiographic recitation. Its mystique is clearer than its method. Hillman sometimes calls it a psychologizing of the past; it seems nearer either literature, psychoanalysis, or even deconstruction. He suggests not taking the "givens" of the past and reducing them, but taking them and "twisting" them:

The particular virtue of the psychological mind is its twisting of the given; seeing through, hearing echo and implication, turning back or upside down. The psychological mind makes the given imagistic, fantastic. Hence its affinity with both the pathological and the poetic, and hence, also, its distance from the programmatics of action and the formulations of the sciences. . . . Where scientific abstractions seek to posit what is really there in the given, substitutive for it and constitutive of it, our abstractions seek to drop the bottom out of the given. (1989a, pp. 217, 218)

This is the archetypal remembering Hillman calls "epistrophe, reversion, return, the recall of phenomena to their imaginal background ... regarding phenomena in terms of their likenesses" (1979a, p. 4).<sup>1</sup> This may imply a dramatization of the stories of one's past, or, perhaps, an expressive poetics. An acting-out with others—what was once called psychodrama—may be useful. But these specificities fail to express the "twistedness," or

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<sup>1</sup>Hillman credits Henry Corbin, the Islamic scholar, for the original method of *ta'will* which means literally, he says, "to lead something back to its origin and principle, to its archetype." (p. 4)



"madness," of what Hillman means. Far from the Freudian couch of shameful confession or even the Jungian/Campbellian fantasy of "awakening to the myth I am living," Hillman (1979a) suggests we should intrude many of the forgotten gods in our re-storying: Pan and Aphrodite, certainly, and maybe even the god of masks, Dionysos, who presides over the madness of carnival. Our approach to the Underworld need not be a somber procession after the grim reaper or psychotherapist but, instead, the ribald reversion to carnival shadow in the wake of the archetypal trickster:

We follow the clown into the circus by entering a perspective of rebellion against the dayworld order; rebel without cause or violence. Turning topsy-turvy, we deliteralize every physical law and social convention in the smallest things that we take for granted. Through him we enter the perspective of the fantastic soul, clown as depth psychologist. Imagine, Freud and Jung, two old clowns. ( p. 180)

This is not the sort of activity that one expects to find in schools, even in advanced autobiographical or lifewriting classes. Yet the "problem" of multiple "I's" has come to be expected by some researchers into narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991). Most of these "I's" are resisted, especially in classroom situations, and others allowed only in unique circumstances like carnival. Hillman says there is an archetype with the face of a god behind the collection of each "I" and each god speaks in a different mode, some of which may seem insane or obscene. To conjure this god out from its concealment, we may have to write in its language. This is akin to dialoging with what Watkins (1990) calls "invisible guests," though Hillman's epistrophic approach may mean identifying with each god, each "mood":

Reversion through likeness, *resemblance*, is a primary principle for the archetypal approach to all psychic events. Reversion is a bridge too, a method which connects an event to its image, a psychic process to its myth, a suffering of the soul to the imaginal mystery expressed therein. Epistrophe, or the return through likeness, offers to psychological understanding a main avenue for recovering order from the confusion of psychic phenomena, other than Freud's idea of development and Jung's of opposites. . . . Epistrophe implies return to multiple possibilities, correspondences with images that can not be encompassed within any systematic account. (1979a, p. 4)

This is imaginal memory (Perlman, 1988) but it is a more accurate reflection of our actual experience. As a singular self-schema attempts to deny or forget most of what we experience and even what we do (Jeremy Campbell, 1989), allowing the other characters in us to speak deepens, widens, and perhaps even adds other dimensions to our awareness. To speak from the position of the abandoned child, or the wild woman, or even the fearful senex is to give voice to what was once only unexplained emotion.

Our experience, according to this view, is always archetypal experience. Our singular self<sup>1</sup> is the conceptualization ("to take to oneself") of an inconceivable singular deity. To allow myth to awaken us to the world and the multiplicities of being, Hillman, Avens, Miller, Paris and others of the archetypal school have made the polytheistic move, which Hillman describes as unavoidable: "The question of polytheism is posed by the soul itself as soon as its perspective experiences the world as animated and its own

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<sup>1</sup>The subjectivity abstracted from language need not be singular.

nature as replete with changing diversity. That is, as soon as the soul is freed from ego domination, the question of polytheism arises" (1983a, p. 35).

Behind and between our rationalizations and narrative enclosures are multiple archetypes which are phenomenal images. Hillman (1977) has said that Jung's "noumenal archetypes" are beyond the reach of language:

Furthermore, unlike Jung, who radically distinguishes between noumenal archetype per se and phenomenal archetypal image, archetypal psychology rigorously refuses even to speculate about a non-presented archetype per se. Its concern is with the phenomenon: the archetypal image. This leads to the next step: "...any image can be considered archetypal. The word 'archetypal'...rather than pointing at something archetypal points *to* something, and this is *value*....by archetypal psychology we mean a psychology of value....'Archetypal' here refers to a move one makes rather than to a thing that is..." (pp. 82-83)

The memory which lies behind all our knowing is drawn through remembered value and image back into the gravital complexes he identifies as "Gods and Goddesses." These, he says, are not objective beings but are (archetypally) present in all our perceiving, so are understood as effective—and affective—presences within us and within the world:

As I have spelled out in several later writings, *psychological* polytheism is concerned less with worship than with attitudes, with the way we see things and place them. Gods, for psychology, are neither believed in nor addressed directly. They are rather adjectival than substantive; the polytheistic experience finds existence qualified with archetypal presence and recognizes faces of the Gods in these qualifications. Only when these qualities are literalized, set apart as substances, that is, become theologized, do we have to imagine through the category of belief. (Hillman, 1981, p. 129)

Yet, if “memory believes before knowing remembers,” as Faulkner is quoted in the epigraph, then memory is itself the gravity which holds the Gods, the archetypes, together enough to provide an inner integration for subjectivity. We—our sole selves—are the objects of memory. The mythic perspective of archetypal psychology, then, is a journey of feeling and humility. Humility because our ego-structures come apart when subjected to the “pathologizing” effects of the gods and goddesses. The form of the deity, however imagined, can only be constructed from the fragments of our own experience, like a whirlwind’s appearing only through that which it draws into itself. The resulting wisdom is that we are mere products of the “word,” that our self-concepts are mythic structures over an abyss of memory, and that our actions are, in truth, under the sway of many “divisibles.” As Gilbert Durand (1976) puts it:

In traditional thought man experiences himself as multiple, diverse. There is no pride in traditional man; he feels himself “divided up” between sleeping and waking, good and evil, angels and demons. It has taken all the discoveries of contemporary depth psychology to bring the *ego* back to this modest pluralism, to show that behind its triumphant consciousness the unconscious proliferates disquieteningly. (p. 89)

This may lead us to the edge of such an abyss, humbling indeed for the self-inflated or those with forgetful “lightness of being.” Archetypal psychology implies that we live our myths indeed, but everyone knows myth means illusion. It is something the Hindus and Buddhists of the East seem to

have had no trouble imagining: It is the denial of vanity, the awareness of vast subconscious suffering, and the insight that what

we experience as our individuality (*my* emotions, *my* temperament, *my* mannerisms) is no more *or less* than a collage of mythical images. The "I" as the experiencer is also in the myth; it is not single and unique, but many, a flux of vicissitudes, an archetypal illusion of self-identity; it is samsaric and imaginal. The first metaphor of human existence is that "we are not real." (Avens, 1981, p. 72)

It is this "disquieting" journey into the "morbisms" of the shadow side why the seeing through (or "feeling through") to the myth or mythic image must be understood as humbling to the central self-schema, but self-creative to the other images who afflict us as moods, intrigue us in visual flashes, cause "beside myself" actions, or who populate our dreams and reveries.

It is all images to the archetypalist. Or, to put it another way, it is all poetry, in the broad sense of image-evocation. Since the archetypal psychologist would not be such were s/he to express him or herself only mythopoeically, s/he instead writes prose as an aesthetic rhetoric. Hillman has indicated his own words should not be taken literally but as a rhetoric to open the soul to the mythopoeic image behind or through the words (1983a, p. 19). The identity of myth with the images of creative literature is hinted at here, and archetypal psychologists quote poets extensively to support their mythic habit. Hillman indicates, however, that myth is the chosen rhetoric of what he has called "soul-making":

Even if the recollection of mythology is perhaps the single most characteristic move shared by all "archetypalists," the myths themselves are understood as metaphors—never as transcendental

metaphysics whose categories are divine figures. . . . More important, however, is that the study of mythology enables one to perceive and experience the life of the soul mythically. (1983a, p. 20)

It seems Hillman's *via negativa* has proved itself to be a *via regia*, as well: the royal road to awareness. Myth for the archetypalist is not a theology and not what most would consider a psychology. For Hillman, such distinctions mean little next to the possibility of attuned awareness (not "consciousness," which implies an object):

It hardly matters to me whether theology or psychology brings awareness to our baggage as long as awareness comes. Rather than separating the theo-psychic mixture, let it continue. It will anyhow. It's an authentic compound, for the soul itself is just this sort of mixture. (1981, p. 128)

Myth is not found in the words of mythological stories, folktales, or even poetry. Though *muthos* may mean word, archetypal psychology means the experience of the mythic image, and this, it must be noted, is as *dependent on the perceiver as on the poet*. The poet need not be consciously making references to myths, even symbolically alluding to them. The mythic image is what is evoked by the poet and potentially by the reader. As Jed Rasula (1979) says with reference to a line by poet Charles Olsen:

Myth, then, is not a content of the poem, but rather the envoy of its visionary circumference. And within the domain that circumference establishes, both interior and exterior cosmos permit configurations of their powers and persons, allowing us the vision that "mythology is not reference / it is *inner inherence*." (p. 114)

It is the aesthetic sense of the "inner inherence" of the myth or the sense of an image which constellates our experience which Hillman indicates is the

“royal road” to ensoulment. Whitehead’s eternal objects, final causation, also projected their effects through an inner inherence in the objective occasions.

Waking dreams are not all living nightmares, not all pathological. By soul-making, Hillman at first seems to have meant a personalized soul. The personalized soul is not being made, but is the hidden source of the making—it seeks to re-make itself in the world. In his more recent writings, Hillman (1989a) seems to understand our task to be to bring the World Soul, *anima mundi* (which includes *my* soul), to consciousness. This re-membering of archetypes is not that cloud-puffy world of imagination, but the life of *this* world, ensouled nature presented as an Arcadia of presences:

At the furthest reach of the cosmological imagination stand the animals. They extend the planetary Gods beyond mythical fictions to actual presences of vigorous life, there above in the dodecahedron<sup>1</sup> and here below, creeping, swimming, and flying among us. The universal in the particular, eternal repetition of form, walking archetypes. (p. 223)

I understand Hillman not to mean a return to preconceptual, animal awareness, but a uniting of human aesthetic awareness with the mythic presences of the “outer” world: The way in is the way out. Even language need not be the “ossification of experience” but instead, used and responded to mythopoeically, it may even create archetypal experience. Anima-animal interpenetration and humanity’s non-egoistic remembering of the world seem

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<sup>1</sup>Plato’s ultimate metaphysical shape (*Timaeus* 55c), a 12-sided figure with a pattern of animals on it: “A very physical sort of metaphysics here.” (Hillman, 1989a, p. 222)

to be some of the deepening highlights on the endless, trackless, mapless journey through myth and symbol to living archetypal presence—inner and outer unveiled. Or so archetypal psychology would have it.

A concentrated definition of archetypal memory might be: *the mythic and affective associations we make towards an archetype*. In this formulation, a myth is a particular image of experience which we value—charge with emotion—according to its place in a primordial image (archetype) and give it voice. The archetype *places* experience. The myth functions prepositionally, as Hillman has noted (1979b, p. 133), to assist in this placing and speaking. Such writing would be emotionally textured, as well, rich in adverb and simile.

**§Loose Ends.** In this sense, we do not possess the mythic complex; it possesses us. This can be positive—the myth of equality, or negative (though my valuations may be culturally relative )—the myth of racial superiority: “Myths seem very persistent, despite their perpetual difficulties. They have caused and continue to cause, much damage. Myths have always led people into the abyss and still do horrible things” (Guggenbühl-Craig, 1991, p. 32). In this sense, the unquestioned myths we live tend to keep us unconscious, victimized. Myths, themselves, are amoral.

We can, however, come to be conscious of the mythology that guides us. Through studying myths, soul-searching, and, most of all, through the



mythic identifications involved in lifewriting, we can speak the voices and see through to the images of the mythic complex which guides our feelings, but we can never see the archetype, in itself. The senior Jungian in Zürich, Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig says: "Archetypes are forces of the soul. They were not 'made' or 'created' by humans. Symbols, however, through which humans try to comprehend archetypes, have been created in part by us" (1991, p. 80).

The other creative "part" is the archetype which imbues the images and symbols of our life with meaning within particular mythologies. It is not too late, I hope, to point out that as Kolakowski (1972/89) opposes empirical, technological thinking to mythic thinking, so all Jung's, Eliade's, and Hillman's ideas on archetypes cannot be called empirical science, but have more value in explaining intuition, inspiration, and emotion: "As is the case for everything of a psychological nature, archetypes cannot be scientifically observed, photographed, or measured. In short, they cannot be discussed objectively. Hence, the theory of archetypes is also a mythology" (Guggenbühl-Craig, 1991, p. 80)

To deal with such storm-centres of the unconscious, archetypal psychology has proposed a mythmaking venture: Provide the archetypes with faces and deal with them as our ancestors have always dealt with powerful forces "outside" of ourselves which have enormous influence upon our lives: as deities. Talk to them, *become them and let them talk*. James

Hillman, himself, prefers those of Ancient Greece, though of gods, goddesses, demons, and angels, the world has images aplenty.

The predominant myth of our time, according to Guggenbühl-Craig (1980, 1991), is the myth of progress, which encompasses other such myths as that of development, improvement, and growth. It creates the situation where behavioral psychologists greet each other with, "Good morning! How am I doing today?"

In the field of curriculum, the extension of this complex is the myth of instruction, that individuals are storage tanks of information, and that nature (or the gods) provides nothing. We can even test to see how much is stored! The media continually remind us of the woes for us all when "others" have not lived up to their information-storing capacity. Everyone must progress further up the ladder of instruction. The more you're taught, the readier you are for life. This is, we are told, only being "realistic." Like all mythologies, this story has a darkside. Like all mythologies, it has seemingly infinite systems of justification. Like all mythologies, experience seems to "prove" its truths. Memory as *techne* rules: even art classes have to be justified in terms of results.

There is no way out of a social mythology, Jungian and archetypal psychology indicate, unless we come to recall the foundational myths of its origin, objectively (as it were). The possession can only be broken through the creation of new myths: symbols and images that seem to inhere in other

instincts, that seem to be needs of another id. New myths will be disruptive, disturbing, or revolutionary, but the archetypalists seem to feel they can be ultimately life-enhancing if they return our soul(s) to the world.

The curricular implications of such a soul-making necessity are manifold and richly suggestive and will be examined in the final chapter. Much of this chapter has been an attempt to trace conceptual memory back into its primordial images. It has been suggested that the solid reality of such images return to us memorially in dreams and hearken us back to Lévy-Bruhl's *participation mystique*, Kristeva's (1989) *one* differentiated world, Heidegger's (1977) *dasein*, and Hillman's ensouled world—where other voices may speak through us.

We do not want a curricular "ecstasis of oblivion" (Heidegger, 1927. In Krell, 1990), I do not think, unless in the forgetting of the self we can discover a more selfless *élan vital* within which to live. Hillman has hinted at such purpose by comparing soul-making with love when he says

we go through the world for the sake of *its* soul-making, thereby our own. This reading suggests a true object libido, beyond narcissism, in keeping with Otto Fenichel's definition of love. Love can only be called such when "one's own satisfaction is impossible without satisfying the object too." If the world is not satisfied by our going through it, no matter how much beauty and pleasure our souls may receive from it, then we live in its vale without love. (1989b, p. 70)

Memory is the substance of culture and requires practice to live its evocations. Such areas as autobiographical writing, conversation, or drawing, as well as imaginal dialogues, imaginative myth participations, and

writing from the “other’s” perspective, are all potential awareness bringers. Lifewriting from an archetypal memory reaches for a kind madness, a kind of madness which simultaneously subjects itself to consciousness. This is autobiographical epistrophe, when the drunken god, or the rebellious child, or the misunderstood angel, may be allowed an imaginal conversation:

The adventure of ideas occurs already in the tongue itself in its adventure of language, that risk of speech, unpredictable diction. Who knows what is coming next? But advent is not the future as a temporal projection. It is a project of language: in the adventure of words themselves. For words are little mythical beings, popping up in jottings, fictions generating fictions, trailing their genealogies as etymology, making music and echo in phonetics, dancing their syntax, perishing and coming to be, more and more of them asking to come in, crowding forward over the exhausted heaps of wingless clichés. Words are angels.<sup>1</sup> (Hillman, 1989a, p. 230)

Most important, however, is the change in lived reality that a mythic, polytheistic memory brings. Remembering ourselves historically, “broadens” us, as they say. Remembering ourselves as having multiple centers of self whose depth exceeds our grasp can only deepen us, open us to what might otherwise be an isolated, threatening world. But remembering ourselves amidst the phantasma of primordial imagery, and *still being there*, can be nothing less than change at the level of metamorphosis. There is no reason to assume such creative remembering of the future has ever taken place.

An ensouled world is not so full of insecure, power-hungry senex figures who glower their way through our short span together. Life is play,

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<sup>1</sup> *Angelos*, message-bearer, but Hillman sees the world as a message-bearing world or an angelic cosmology (1989a, note 26).

the myths remind us, even if the play may be very serious, indeed. Realizing that the stories of “I” are not even the centre of each of our own worlds allows this “seeing through”—so similar to deconstruction—of the archetypalists to include the masks of others, as well as each of our own dearly beloved masks. Dionysian experience in various dramatic situations may reveal whole complexes of masks available for the wearing.

We (as a collections of subjects) may not be real, so we should feel more courageously ready to create each day as though it were our last. But as Gilbert Durand, one of the proto-archetypalists, reminds us: “For the sorcerer it is always dawn” (1976, p. 102). The power of memorial imagery creates each day as though it were time’s first. It is the sorcerer whose place is never certain, because mythmaking—*writing*—approximates magic.

Myth reaches down into the depth of time behind us, and it has greater implications for education in the depths of time ahead of us. Hillman’s body of rhetoric centered on “pathologizing” and the “death dealing” journey into soul-making have the aroma of the first step of initiatory processes, involving loss of identity and ritual death. There is no goal, according to Hillman, just as the mystery rites never speak of what is ultimately revealed. Ovid understood that “inhering” in all mythology is life-altering experience; that is perhaps why he called his famous collection of mythic tales *Metamorphoses*. In this way, Hillman (1979d) calls for a restorying, a soul-making of the world:

I have come at this from a psychological viewpoint, partly because I wish to remove story from its too close association with both education and literature—something taught and something studied. My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life. (p. 45)

Simultaneously, he refuses his own mythic epistrophe for what he envisions as the appropriate storytelling for schools. Disappointingly, he expresses the curricular view of the educational traditionalist who *knows* what culture is, without leaving room for multicultural views or even alien gods:

Which stories need to be told? Here I am orthodox, holding for the old, the traditional, the ones of our own culture: Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Nordic myths; the Bible; legends and folk tales. And these with the least modern marketing (updating, cleaning up, editing, etc.), i.e., with the least interference by contemporary rationalism which is subject to the very narrowing of consciousness which the stories themselves would expand. Even if we be not Celtic or Nordic or Greek in ancestry, these collections are the fundamentals of our Western culture and they work in our psyches whether we like it or not. We may consider them distorted in their pro-Aryan or pro-male or pro-warrior slant, but unless we understand that these tales depict the basic motifs of the Western psyche, we remain unaware of the basic motives in our psychological dynamics. (p.45)

It is strange that Hillman, as a psychoanalyst who listens to personal stories, should relegate curriculum to objective story-studies. I feel lifewriting, at some point, could be used experimentally as epistrophe to awaken voices and bring light to faces we have either forgotten or never listened to before. These invisible guests could be encouraged to speak and act through us as educated mediums. The curriculum might revitalize the experience of both person and world. It may have to move from its buildings. Knowledge, according to the archetypalists, will have to make room for *gnosis*, a more

active alchemical way of knowing which may lead to experiences of death and rebirth during this lifespan. At least it should be so if we dare imagine that archetypal psychology has a form of *gnosis* to offer lost souls. It was Durand (1976) who said: "Being is a call to transmutation" (p. 101), a way of being too unpredictable for modern technical control and so not considered in present schooling. The bell rings and we rigidify. The bell could ring, as in Zen temples, as a signal to awaken. At least according to the myth of a mythology of a lost world of archetypal realism!

**§Backward masking.** I have perceived memory as an active principle in the natural world and in the subtle dynamism of matter. I have invoked the world of primordial images as a sort of chaos from which mythologized images emerged, usually in the form of daimons and deities, to dwell among people as culture-bringers.

Mythic images elide into mythic concepts, and language becomes the caravan which conceals its sacred cargo of images. The world becomes the word and naming creates *things*, "the *one* differentiated." Mythology is at the heart of every ethos and inspired narrative discourse provides the mode for the keeping the world ensouled by returning it to the *illud tempus*.

Periodically, the cargo is opened and the mythic image re-experienced through hallowed ritual and dance, song and chant.

Language becomes aware of itself and subjects “discover” that they are the creators of it, so the space of subjectivity is displaced within language. Narrative appears as stories with a beginning, middle, and end. The moral imperative in this closed discourse is overseen by custom and law, by the class of priests and kings and by the soldiery of the hieratic city-state. Language is perceived as one-way communication from subjectivity to subjectivity. Language becomes commerce. History is begun. Time is discovered. Individual subjectivities become aware of their personal histories: Memory—through narrative and imagery—tells *me* who *I* am. The world becomes object and I internalize its soul as my own: until even that is forgotten and the amnesia of self is begun.

Though time is now understood to be irreversible (Prigogine & Stengers), remembering, it seems, is that which allows us to venture upon the journey of the eternal return. There is, however, no remembering beyond the self which is a narrative creation. The paradox, as stated by Klossowski (in Krell) and Heidegger (1962), is that the “beyond of language” (Heidegger, 1977) can only be approached through the “oblivion of self-forgetting” (Heidegger).

What is beyond the narrative of self? According to the archetypalists, concealed within language and semiology and therefore possible to “re-vision” (Hillman, 1975b), is the primordial image—the mythic image which seems to have suddenly and mysteriously brought about our peculiar sort of



human awareness, though without narration life must have been very like a waking dream. For Hillman (1975a), memory as epistrophe—imaginal resemblance or identity—is the way to recover archetypal imagery.

Existential experience beyond or before this imagistic reality can only be indirectly inferred as “Absolutely Other”<sup>1</sup> (Otto, 1917/73) or as the “raw” state of the organism in Lacan’s (1977) impossible real: “the umbilical cord of the symbolic.” It may be negatively suggested by the “No-Image” of Lao Tzu (Izutsu) or the “Nothing” of Zen (Izutsu). Or it may be nothing at all.

Having traced memory “forward” and then invoking the ecstasis of an “eternal return” back through myth to the “unthinkable” primordial image, I suggest that the return to such images is nothing less than the fertile bed of the imagination. It is for this reason I pose the formula that imagining is more a mode of remembering than remembering of imagining. As the image leads into the opening space of futurity in imagining, so the creative arts best express the mindfulness of *memor*.

Mindful of this, I shall now turn to literature, and especially poetry, as “disciplinary” referencing points to explore the phenomena of my own experiences of memory and to provide a hermeneutic for the potential evocation of meaning therein.

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<sup>1</sup>Here, less the otherness of God than the “absolutely unknowable.”

## **Chapter 5: The Coll of Time and the Recoll of Memory**

*"That a thought rises only by descending, progressing only by  
regressing—inconceivable spiral whose 'pointless'  
description proves to be repugnant."*

(Pierre Klossowski, Nietzsche et le Cercle Vicieux. Krell, 1990, p. 278)

§**"Being and Remaining..."** (Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape*, 1983): Only everything remains to indicate the void from which we have come. Being forever remains curled around its empty centre, its gaping wound (Kristeva, 1987)<sup>1</sup>. Like the black holes around which swirl spiral galaxies, this null point both sucks energy into non-being and expels it out into being (Toben & Wolf, 1982). It neither *is* nor *is not*.

Those in the curriculum field who have been working to recover the suppressed memories hidden within institutional jargon (e.g., Huebner, 1975; Apple, 1979; Anyon, 1988; Franklin, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1989; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) or who have been developing lifewriting practices to discover or transform the memories within the habits of individual students and teachers (from Pinar, 1972, to Witherell & Noddings, 1991, and Graham, 1991. See chapter 1) have found no source, no fountainhead within the labyrinth of self from which all truth flows. The Absolutely Other (Derrida, 1992; Otto, 1927/73) before/outside wordworlds

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<sup>1</sup>Kristeva sometimes means the yearning for the mother's body.

eludes language and must do so. If I am but a concatenation of words, is there any use looking within, before words, for whatever it is I might be?

Lifewriting cannot *tell* what the life *is* that is writing, it can only use the self to express the *trace* (Derrida, 1978) of its unspeakable end, absent-presence, and origin. Gasché (1986), notes the “quasi-transcendental” status of Derrida’s notions of trace and *différance*. “The absolute past is *retained* in the trace” (Krell, p. 182). Such a trace is of a past, as Merleau-Ponty has said (1945/78), which has never been present. Krell (1990) adds: “To envisage such a past, however darkly, is to have experienced the failure of the traditional model for memory” (p. 7). Once narration begins, the lifewriter can only gather the scattered bits and inferences of the already-spoken everything in a vain attempt to transcend the wordworld’s closure.

We emerge into everythingness. The senses mingle incestuously. Nothing is distinct or differentiated. Everything is no-thing. How is it we come to be as distinct entities? Let me personalize: In what manner did I become an *I*? Is the motive force behind this much-maligned, much altered, much-abused body my soul? my genes? *me*?

I remember remembering when I could have gone back. That is to say, I can no longer remember a time when I did not remember a time before (just as the “ancients” always memorialized previous ancients). They and I cannot recall beginnings, or the non-time before time. But I remember articulating (in some manner) that I could recall feeling that I need not “come

out,” that I need not follow the seduction of the smiles encouraging me to eat, to hug, to smile back. I remember thinking that I had felt that I could go back/before/within/out—and what a tingling of bliss danced around such dissolutive potential! I could just shut off the synesthetic sensory bother and fall back to oceanic bliss. Oh yes: “*Not in entire forgetfulness.../But trailing clouds of glory do we come...*” and all that. Earth may “*fill her lap with pleasures of her own*” (Wordsworth, 1807a) but nothing like the transpersonal joy that urged me back, senseless but serene.

Unease crept through: Some inkling that *I* who was on the verge of making such a momentous decision (Good Lord, it's “To be or not to be...”) would not be there for the next decision. Such a thought could not arise from the blissful nowhen of absolute memory: I was already attached to the disease of self. I remember remembering that I would embrace the “*inevitable yoke*” (Wordsworth) so *I* would not dissolve. It was bliss or being: Why choose being?

Perhaps it has to do with double glance of Hermes, the god of boundaries, looking both ways at once, to being and non-being (López-Pedraza, 1989). Only one “way” chooses, however. With the act of choosing, being is aware of being: both ways becomes duplicitous.

The secret bliss transmogrifies into omnivorous horror. *I* fear *I* will be lost. The terror stalks when the senses darken and desperately I seek to sunder identity from its *unspeakable* source. *One* flees into the world, but it is

a chaos of multiple selves in such action which is expressed by Beckett in his possibly autobiographical novella, *Company* (1980):

What visions in the dark of light! Who exclaims thus? Who asks who exclaims, What visions in the shadeless dark of light and shade! Yet another still? Devising it all for company. (1980, pp. 59, 60)

One becomes “one” by entering the stories of others—company—and, through naming and subtle allusion, learns who one is. There is an existence aware of itself existing which “enconceptualates” a self from the concepts projected by the world: “I’m in words, made of words, others’ words. . . .” (Beckett, *The Unnameable*, 1983). The words congeal until we find ourselves in Graves’ “Cool Web” (1927): “*There’s a cool web of language winds us in,/Retreat from too much joy or too much fear. . . .*”

Now I know: “I,” “me,” “mine,” refer *only* to my secret being: the unified entity inferred by reference. This in-ferred singularity of differences isolates me but fills me with the power of secrecy: I now nurture yearnings which will strengthen my *place* in this realm of denial. I now know the name for the bliss/threat of unbeing and I will never forget it: They call it “death.”

I lie alone in my oblong room at night aware that falling to sleep is like falling into the abyss. I do not close my eyes until dreams take me without consent or knowledge. Instead, I listen and look in fear—the fear is *of* me. I recognize it and hold it to me. There are rage and desire, as well, but they are the stuff of the shifting shadows behind the always partially open door of

my clothes closet. They swirl in the darkness under my bed which seeks to draw me in. They are not *of* me.

I hear the voices of my parents rise in the next room, the pat of my sister's bare feet as she sneaks to the bathroom. Silence. Then I hear insidious whispers and muffled laughter which I cannot comprehend. I feel compelled to an attuned intensity.

Who is talking? More mysterious still: Who is listening? *I* am the self who loves the world so the world must love me (*"If I should die before I wake..."*). *I* am good. *I* shall try not to *strain* into the dark or listen to its fearful suggestions in the thunder, in my dreams. The shadows straining for freedom from the hidden corners of my room are not me—*Not ME!*

If I cry in my terror it will bring *her* to my bedside: "It's only a dream," she will say but I will extend my whimpering in an attempt to keep her longer. She knows I am good. *I* wish no harm on anyone. The rustling, breathing dark places are evil and seek release in *the act*. But why do they attempt to draw me to them? *I? I am good.*

I am told of death but it is an abstraction no more real than "God." Death is for others. I exist. And there are I things I want. I learn to bargain with the dark whisperers and they eke out their needs through the subtle social sanction of sexual fantasy. The "clouds of glory" (Wordsworth) dissipate in compromise: Duplicity. Rationalization. Narrative.

My secret, private world grows until the day comes when I doubt the existence of others. Am I the only one with inner thoughts, emotions, and dreams? *Why are their eyes always so veiled?* My solipsistic enormity begins to imagine the world as a vast test existing only for me. Today I am grateful I did not objectify others as only moving matter—the hell-trip of psychopathology.

Even Narcissus leaves the mirror-stage (Lacan, 1977) at some point. I had been telling Clyde about what I had learnt about the size of the universe. We looked at the arching night-sky over the Saskatchewan prairie while I described with growing awe the stars that were planets, and the Milky Way in which our sun was but one among billions, and other stars which were actually other galaxies, also numbering in the billions. Clyde became so frightened his freckles jumped and he ran home. I lay back and picked out one distant blue star and let it study me as I tried to comprehend.

Of course, I could not. But I fell back—fell *before*—as the hypnotic blue light enlightened me as to my utter insignificance—an insignificance so incomprehensible as to be astonishing. I was silent for days after that, never able to explain to my mum how I had come to wet my pants at my age. Nor can I recall today. The bliss abyss tells no tales.

The years of self-construction again are poised over an action. Now my boyhood self hungers for something *vital* missing, which must, I assume, be in the world. The world seems a mystery, but with a prize within. All the

tales I have been told since infancy and the Greek myths I have just been absorbing seem to unite into an urge to seek some great treasure. School has stolen the adventure, but now I have discovered a better use for language than “phonics” or grammar: writing whatever is imaginable, whatever my fancy damned well pleases.

There is a complacency to self when it learns its script, when its stories have become memorialized and relegated to ritual. Ah, the sweet contentment of those who have named the abyss, placed it, and filed it. For such, writing is always labour at least, and sometimes a serious threat. I found great liberation in my adventure stories, a liberation through the *limitation of writing*. At this early stage, I had to forget who I had memorized I was, and listen darkly or in the air for all that I imagined I could be:

As though in order to begin writing one did not have to forget or otherwise suppress most of what memory and reminiscence have meant; as though the entire matter of memory, reminiscence, recall, recollection, revery, and repetition were not an endless overture arising out of an absolute past and capable of infinite development; as though one were not always writing on the verge of both remembrance and oblivion alike. (Krell, 1990, p. 1)

At this stage, all that “I could be” was still idealized from the memory of the world with its opening for a hero of one face or another (as in Campbell, 1949/68). Writing opened the world and gave me a more realistic place within it (than thinking it was me). A quest, however envisioned, becomes a con-quest unfulfilled when the imagination roams like the wind, unattached, ungrounded. All the holding-pens for heroes awaiting the cattle call, heroes



that will never be, become the overcrowded bins of braggadocio. The dream fades, and even Ulysses must look for novelty:

*Little remains; but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things ...* (Tennyson, 1833)

Other dreams come, no longer of conquest, but of *a return*. The scene changes. The body ages. Desire becomes a relentless dominatrix. Frustration, itself, is not enough to keep me going. My attention wavers, but the self-collection urges me on through my meagre accomplishments. I want *more*. I want the beyond. I read astronomy. I want transcendence. I want out. Yes, drive on. Yes, I dream...

*Of driving alone, without luggage, out a long peninsula,  
The road lined with snow-laden second growth,  
A fine dry snow ticking the windshield,  
Alternate snow and sleet, no on-coming traffic,  
And no lights behind, in the blurred side-mirror,  
The road changing from glazed tarface to a rubble of stone,  
Ending at last in a hopeless sand-rut,  
Where the car stalls,  
Churning in a snowdrift  
Until the headlights darken.  
(Roethke, 1964)*

I have become a being fearing his demise, desiring his predominance: fearing his desire and (O anxiety!) desiring his fear. I am tensed in extension. I re-collect the mystic art of veiling my soul: *persona*. I am *one* for and to the world.

One interacts. One becomes a subject—which is to say an object. One rationally orders one's self-tales for immediate delivery, available on

call. At last, one succumbs to history, a larger totality of one. One seeks to find one's place, to embed one's narrative in the Grand Narrative. The private motivators of fear and desire become compressed, repressed, and, finally, sublime-ated into the Grand Fear, the Grand Desire. One putrefies in blandness and dare not question why one continues at all. One slinks into unity. Beckett, as always, hears the voices of a sundered soul:

I don't know, perhaps it's a dream, all a dream, that would surprise me, I'll wake, in the silence, and never sleep again, it will be I, or dream, dream again, dream of silence, a dream silence, full of murmurs, I don't know, that's all words, never wake, all words, there's nothing else, you must go on, that's all I know, they're going to stop, I know that well, I can feel it, they're going to abandon me, it will be the silence, for a moment, a good few moments, or it will be mine, the lasting one, that didn't last, that still lasts, it will be I, you must go on, I can't go on, you must go on, I'll go on, you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on, perhaps it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before the door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens, it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. (*The Unnameable*, 1983, pp. 190, 191)

**§Self-Shapes.** From the "gaping wound" of blissful non-existence, my story has unfolded outward bound. It seems to describe the dream of a linear trajectory from the terror of losing the self ascribed to me to the uniting of that self with its source in the semiotic totality of culture. The symbols of this *Lebenswelt*, primarily language, camouflage the secret yearnings of

divergent memories and less sociable selves. The *Lebenswelt* describes not just a space but aspires to control time, as well.

Bergson (1911/83) understood differently: "But, as regards the psychical life unfolding beneath the symbols which conceal it, we readily perceive that time is just the stuff it is made of" (p. 4). Time not as the ideology of linear progress would have it, but as the continual *becoming* into unpredictable convergences. Bergson (1911/83) believed we need more than the security of mental calculation; to tune into the "time of nature," we need creative intuition:

The first kind of knowledge has the advantage of enabling us to foresee the future and of making us in some measure masters of events. . . . It symbolizes the real and transposes it into the human rather than expresses it. The other knowledge, if it is possible, is practically useless, it will not extend our empire over nature. (p. 343)

Space, the other face of time, also lacks extension into the future. Extension disappears beyond immediate perspective, as the parallelism of O]railway tracks dissolves into infinity in the distance. Where, then, can I/we find the *shape* of my/our destiny? Or is it even possible, as Beckett worries,hnhgbbbv to find "the threshold of my story"? Surely it matters to what climax my/our story portends?

Can I recall my bliss? No. Can I expect such bliss to await me? No *I* cannot. If there is only the "going on," it is a journey into the same timeless void which precedes existence. "Timeless voids" can hardly be compared as merely "similar." What reality can there be between poles of the abyss?

What can we imagine suspended, bridge-like, between nothingness and nothingness? All that may exist are what Paul Veyne (1988), calls the “palaces of the imagination”:

These palaces are not built in space, then. They are the only space available. They project their own space when they arise. There is no repressed negativity around them that seeks to enter. Nothing exists, then, but what the imagination, which has brought forth the palace, has constituted. (pp. 121, 122)

Veyne maintains that, as the Greeks lived their myths but most often disbelieved them, we, too, can hope to find no truth “awaiting.” Life “goes on” mythically—*as if*—with intention deeper than belief:

Nothing equals the assurance and perseverance with which we ceaselessly open these broad extensions into the void. . . . The opposition between truth and error is not on the scale of this phenomenon. . . . Even the opposition between truth and fiction appears as secondary and historical; the distinction between the imaginary and the real no less so. (p. 122)

The irony of Veyne’s last phrase seems necessary to indicate this existential courage, even in the face of “factual” nihilism. It is in the richest of ironies that Beckett (1965) suggests imagination’s imperturbability: “No trace anywhere of life, you say, pah, no difficulty there, imagination not dead yet, yes, dead, good, imagination dead imagine” (p. 7).

The world of primordial images, group fantasy, imagination—call it what you will—cannot be subverted by turning from the world. As Jung was quoted in the last chapter: “The gods have become diseases” (CW 13§54) and our angels may become demons. It was in my twentieth year that I awoke from the dream of self to the awakened dream of the world; it was that

same year that I began the plummet into all the hells the whisperers can conjure and the further hells a culture without wisdom can devise.

Post-transcendence, I find myself signed up on the grand tour of “maturity.” Freud’s “reality principle” kicks in and I can now put away the illusions of childhood for the *real* illusions of adulthood. But our scientific/consumeristic metanarrative tells me nothing: I live, I talk, I *process*, I die. The well-advertised proclamation is that by identification with the omnipresent Grand Narrative that a kind of immortality is attained. No longer need *oneself* worry about personal memories, about unfinished stories, about unnameable fear. “*Objectify, objectify/Identify, identify...*” The whispers are now those of the Grand Stage’s promises.

I have learned and listened and now I identify personal memory with historical memory and am assured that we are on the grand train to revelation. We strive together for given ends. We imagine that by being certain of our facts we may control our destiny. Even my life story becomes literalized as a *résumé*, memorized for easy identification. Lifewriting becomes recitation.

Does knowing the truth—as in a chronicle—add to our awareness in the present? Not according to Veyne:

But on rare occasions it happens that a bend in the road permits the travelers to look back and see a long stretch of the road and all its zigzags. . . . This retrospective vision speaks truly, but it does not make the road any more false, since the road could not be true. . . . Could this be because I wrote this book in the country? I was envying the placidity of the animals. (p. 128)

To catch an accurate backward glance reveals only the illusion of our sense of controlled direction. The crazy mesh of "roads" behind reveals only present bewilderment. Veyne seems to prefer the "placidity of animals" to a human mind carrying on in delusion, forgetting that "The time has been, that, when the brains were out, the man would die" (*Macbeth*. III. 4. 77, 78).

We become listeners only to our own semiosis, caught in our own cycles of repetition and *forget to remember to listen for nothing*. We become concerned with righting the past and seeking the chain-link causes for the present just as we predict the future and attempt to make it so. Without a sense of *presence* we become caught in the nothingness of symbolic time and can no longer apprehend even a trace of timeless nothingness, like Stevens' "Snow Man":

*For the listener, who listens in the snow,  
And, nothing himself, beholds  
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.* (1923)

In this land of forgetting, the "official" timeline is just that: *a line*. From the womb to the tomb, we march on in our dutiful progress and it is considered to be in the utmost bad taste to dwell on personal deaths. In Big Story, death is only a vulgar imagining. But my death lies "ahead," dressed up in marble and dirt. The less I wish to think of it (by, say, working for "the good of society"), the more the awaiting tomb drains life of all savour, the more purposeless seem my palaces of the imagination, and the more I feel the weariness of the social procession:

*"O plunge your hands in water,  
Plunge them in up to the wrist;  
Stare, stare in the basin  
And wonder what you've missed.*

*"The glacier knocks in the cupboard,  
The desert sighs in the bed,  
And the crack in the teacup opens  
A lane to the land of the dead.  
(W. H. Auden, 1940)*

"The lane to the land of the dead" or "the nothing that is" is the inevitable result of living a linear narrative. We have no preconceptual memory to postconceptually project. Try as we might, we do not remember how to die. Certain religions, of course, indicate that dogmatic transgression makes a difference in the afterlife—*"Heaven or Hell, baby"*—or in the metempsychosis into the *next* life, but such results are very much *their story*.

Our pseudo-scientific metanarrative position seems to be that death is simply one character's departure from the grander story. Death may be a place or state, but that state must be inalterable and final (in one way or another), so it is certainly *unconscionable*. Whether ethereal gratification (for all) or oblivion (across the board) or spiritual transmigration (automatic), the metanarrative message is: **Life has nothing to do with death.**

We are here (but do not remember how) and our private existence does not matter in the slightest, except as it impacts on Big Story. My own story can be nothing more than "a tale told by an idiot" (*Macbeth*. V. 5. 26,27). What possible purpose, then, for autobiography in education, for research in teachers' stories, for *lifewriting*? One's appearance on the stage of time is so

brief and meaningless, in itself, that it must be asked whether teaching, itself, has any purpose other than the furtherance of the larger goals of society, however they may be perceived.

All this alters as my vision of a life becomes *shapeshifted*. Is a life a meaningless round, a meaningless line, or a shifting palace? What is the shape of a life? What is the shape of this life?

After saying each life has "its own particular delineation, its distinctive form and direction, its own 'teleological unity,'" thus suggesting a line, James Olney (1972) admits that, finally, "no one can foredraw the exact shape of destiny." Our experience in the life surrounding us, on the other hand, where presumed self meets presumed self (and they elide into unheard harmonies and imperceptible presences) Olney describes more as a ripple effect:

The self of each of us, that one source at which we experience life, is surrounded by a complex and sometimes, no doubt, bewildering series of concentric circles: those greater and greater abstractions derivable from the single concretion and the final reality of individual being. (p. 326)

The circular shape of life has been assumed by our species since we were driven to periodic rituals of cosmic renewal (Eliade, 1954, 1963). Since Gilgamesh sought eternal life, narratives of the hero's journey created the individual quest, described by Joseph Campbell (1949/68) as beginning with "The Call" and ending with "The Return," a circle despite the changes to the adventurer. Many have considered the seeker's journey as an archetype of everyperson's life-journey, and sometimes beyond life (e.g. Henderson &



Oakes, 1963; van der Leeuw, 1950/64). In the latter case, the circle must not be understood as inevitable, for would-be heroes are sometimes overcome by the trials and the temptations of the quest—one of the greatest threats being forgetfulness of purpose, as on the island of the lotus-eaters or drinking from the waters of Lethe.

Conversely, Heidegger and Hillman have been interpreted as having the similar project of forgetting or seeing-through the heroic ego as a kind of soul-making journey to nowhere (Avens, 1982). Mary Doll (1988) also understands Beckett's central characters to be an inversion of the heroic ego: "Beckett's quest by male questers begins a far more difficult task for modern consciousness—the task of undoing the ego in an attempt to rediscover the soul, or psyche" (p. 20).

In either case, the wonderful faith remains that a lifetime of individual integration, or egoistic disintegration, affects the whole ("we go through the world for the sake of *its* soul-making..." Hillman, 1989b, p. 70) and radiates Olney's "concentric circles," which Roethke (1964) expresses this way:

*The pure serene of memory in one man—  
A ripple widening from a single stone  
Winding around the waters of the world.*

**§An Ectoplasmic Listener?** Much depends on the interpretation of that “single stone” or the sense of memory here employed. The individual self and even “mind” are seen as linguistic constructions by phenomenologists, semiologists, and by narrative theorists:

If we believe so strongly in such an internal subject it is perhaps because we have imagined such an entity to exist; we were either told, or somehow been misled by, stories and theories that posit such an ethereal being. (Kerby, 1991, p. 1)

This position should not be seen as validating the Grand Narratives over the “*pure serene of memory*,” I do not think. Even here, the imaging power of the soul may have primacy. The self the world gave me took the burden of my desire and the shadow of my soul. I experience that self in isolation but can also listen to its mutually formative dialogue with the world—the circle of mutual interpretations, as Kirby (1991) explains:

In hermeneutics this circular dialectic (which need not be construed as a vicious circle) is seen as one of parts and wholes: the parts can be understood only in relation to the whole they comprise, and vice versa. In light of this insight we are perhaps justified in concluding that it is especially through the unifying action of narration that temporal expanses are given *meaning*. (p. 3)

If my self is indeed comprised of and *in* narratives, then my lifewriting must powerfully affect that self and its compositional memories; and if that self is so affected, then so must be the whole which shares the hermeneutic circle with that self. Does this imply that the memorializations of the whole are also somehow altered?

Lifewriting or an artistic representation can never *enconceptualate* a self or the truth of life. *I* live a story. *I* am creating my story—tragic, nihilistic, or mutant—right here before you. But there are larger circles of stories around me. The *occasions* of existence (Whitehead, 1978) expand my memories and my potential for further action. Much of this action enmeshes my being with those of others, like expanding ripples from thrown stones—meeting, overlapping, yet still retaining individual patterns.

I was deceived from the beginning when I learned “*I*” and imagined I was alone in my private sphere of awareness. I did not know that this was part of my cultural heritage—the myth of the individual. I did not know my desires and fears were so obvious to others and so shared with them, their form given in language.

I find I am both listener and teller. The teller summarizes: *Self is constituted in and through relations with others. Relations are culturally determined. Culture's form is narrative, built with language. Memory takes form through narrative. Self takes form through memory. Self as persona is a linguistic construct adapted to cultural demands. Culture, language, and self are sublimations/expressions of desire (or, more nicely, concern).*

*Lifewriting—written narrative—is relational as well as being self-constitutive:*

Either as participant or as an observer, as one who possesses limited or complete knowledge, the narrator cares. Even though he may know all and observe from the extreme edge of the text, the narrator remains focused on the textual world and is concerned about the outcome of the events occurring there. (Richardson, 1989, p. 42)

My complacent self can hear only my own recitations and those of the world which augment them. I do not write complacently for I write *toward* a deferred position which listens for my words. This lifewriter, here on paper, is has another memory entirely than he who watches TV or chats over coffee; but the being *who listens* may not attain to the attributes of being at all, especially the necessary levee of (active) memory. As I write, I may approach this waiting silence and find my words forgetting *me*. Maslow (1973) has observed that

the creative person, in the inspirational phase of the creative furor, loses his past and his future and lives only in the moment. He is all there, totally immersed, fascinated and absorbed in the present, in the current situation, in the here-now, with the matter-in-hand. . . . This ability to become 'lost in the present' seems to be a *sine qua non* for creativeness of any kind. But also certain *prerequisites* of creativeness—in whatever realm—somehow have something to do with this ability to become timeless, selfless, outside of space, of society, of history. (p. 58)

Perhaps this "timelessness" of creativity is the result of becoming attuned to that listening non-presence who recedes as I approach. I could not write anything without an *uncertain teleology*, but that timelessness which draws existence from me-in-time could not do so without that self-in-time.

The unnameable at either end of life (or so we linearly imagine) cannot possibly in itself attend to harmonics of being (or so I imagine). The unnameable as an empty centre from which being arises and to which it returns (or so we circularly imagine) is always present *as unnameable*: "The hidden harmony is stronger than the visible" (Herakleitos. In Freeman, p. 28).

To perceive the harmony, however, to be attuned to its pre/post primordial/teleological *presence* requires a trace of self to remain “outside” or somehow apart from the circle of the recollected, social self. This *revenant* is in a “position” of silence, solitude, and attunement (atonement?). This is a “transparent” self which needs its social subjectivity only to express the “hidden harmony” in whatsoever way it may dream fit (including using the memories of the recollected self as an instrument, as it were). Does this *ectoplasmic listener* have awareness which goes far beyond its original self-structure (though its expression, if it choose to have one, could not)? Forever in company, real or imagined, the listener cannot be heard, but the self must forgo distraction to attune to it: “*The capacity to be alone thus becomes linked with self-discovery and self-realization; with becoming aware of one’s deepest needs, feelings, and impulses.*” (Storr, 1988, p. 21)

This ghostly, timeless self-silence—a silence which listens—seems to draw from the creations, repetitions and memories of time but is not drawn (of itself) into the prison of time. This Absolutely Other must be of the same void within memory I had morbidized under the grim concept of death.<sup>1</sup> But concepts are *in time*, and are *real*. With a *concept* like death before us, no

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<sup>1</sup>Of course, the concept of death can always be reduced simply to mutual concern: “To use death to justify narrative, however, is to appeal to a matter of broad and, as it were, democratic interest. Here the authority of narrative, hence that of those who interpret narrative, rests not on skepticism—or, finally, on death itself—but rather on the number of human beings who acknowledge death as their concern” (Robbins, 1992, p. 49).

wonder we seek to control the future! But what I had called death is Other and *not* conceivable. It is *altarity*,<sup>1</sup> here implied in Mark Taylor's (1987) discussion of the French philosopher, Maurice Blanchot:

Blanchot stresses the unsettling interplay of time and death. Being, which is never present as such, is a tendency toward *l'a-venir*. From this point of view, being is a being-toward "the nonarrival of that which comes toward." By interpreting the absolute future, which approaches without arriving, in terms of "death and dying," Blanchot is led to an unexpected conclusion. If death only approaches, I (or the I) never die. "One never dies now," Blanchot points out, "one always dies later, in the future—in a future that is never actual, that cannot come except when everything will be over and done. And when everything is accomplished, there will be no more present: the future will again be past." . . . The impossibility of death does not mean that life is eternal. To the contrary, the silence of Midnight is the speechless tolling of *le glas* that echoes in and through all things and every one. The impossibility of death is the "non-event" in which the Impossible itself draws near. ( pp. 242, 243. Blanchot quoted from *The Space of Literature*.)

I could say I have eased away from the sales pitch of Big Story by changing my relationship to death. But it is not at all clear that any sort of relationship can be said to exist with an Absolute Other that cannot be said, *in itself*, to exist! I have found that both silent reverie (back) and creative action (toward) involve large doses of anxiety because of the uncertainty of relating to anything.

Jorge Luis Borges (1992) attempts to write from the position of the silent other but finds only uncertainty and a sense of inevitable appropriation:

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<sup>1</sup>"Altarity" is Taylor's neologism whose suggestions are complex, but the mingling of "alterity" with the silent awe evoked by "altar" may suffice.

I tried to to free myself from him and went from the mythologies of the suburbs to the games with time and infinity, but those games belong to Borges now and I shall have to imagine other things. Thus my life is a flight and I lose everything and everything belongs to oblivion, or to him.

I do not know which of us has written this page. (p. 41)

Can one *be* the silent other, even to oneself? The active imagination, the active listener, the active memory: all imply *action* in the here and now—the eternal present—not passive adsorption in the self-affirming narratives offered by the culture-industry or in complacent relationships. Ginette Paris (1990) connects the active memory to the prenarrative image as the relation between the goddess Memory and her daughters, the Muses of the arts:

It's an active memory which breaks into consciousness through archetypes, dreams and myths, fantasies, symbols and artistic work. ... But it is not just of the past, a taped recording; it is constructive, evocative, poignant, and the beginning of musing as Mnemosyne was the mother of the Muses. (p. 121)

This “musing” is akin to reverie and has for its material all the microversals<sup>1</sup> of memory. The hint here is that creative action—possible only with a non-self-centered memory—may take one through the portals of fear and desire, take one beyond the finitude of the socially-constructed subject, take one into the realms of microversals piercing past and future. Bachelard

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<sup>1</sup>*Microversals* as opposed to *universals*: all the discrete and discordant phenomena of past existence and perhaps existing unbound in the future as well. They suggest Whitehead's eternal objects but also space/time-independent “quantum fluctuations” (Toben & Wolf, 1982).

(1987) pierces my verbosity: "*Poetic images condense infinite meanings in elliptic associations*" (p. 28).

Poetic reverie seems to take the particular phenomena of existence (and this means phenomena remembered, if perception is understood as time-delayed through memory) and folds them back upon themselves in "elliptic associations." Lifewriting—since we all have lives, no matter how limited the attention our living may receive—must be one of the first motions toward such reverie. Lifewriting may attain to a reverie which finds the archetypal past projected into the future as epistrophe: a resembling *or re-assembling or disassembling*. Or, as Taylor (1987) interprets Nietzsche, as repetition:

In repetition, the past that is never present is reversed and appears as the future that is always deferred. The guise of this future is death. Death ... is the present absence or absent presence that forms the ever approaching-receding horizon of human experience. The "beyond" of death opens with repetition. (p. 96)

A folding-back or elliptic association is not merely a repetition, however. It suggests the power to (ap)perceive through attuned memory. The (ap)perceiver must be a self whose centre has been replaced (through a kind of death) by a shifting (and shifty) transparency. In such "ecstasis," Heidegger infers that "for the most part we *are* our own having-been" (quoted earlier, in Krell, p. 331). The "creative core" is nowhere and no-thing and so everywhere and all.



**§Experiential Excursus.** We all sat around the cabin waiting. Setsuko glanced at Jarot from time to time, hopefully, it seemed. She rose and looked out into through the sheltering conifers down toward Nanoose Bay then sighed and returned to her mat. Jarot sat splayed—hands on the floor, legs akimbo—against the log walls. He glanced up suddenly at regular intervals, looking about nervously, then reverted to stillness, eyes inward. Was he worried about the effects of our ingestion, or that there would be no effects at all? Jake sat with his long limbs curled around himself, poking listlessly through the dust on the plank floor with a twig he had found among the firewood. His red-rimmed eyes looked especially withdrawn framed by his wild hair and the thick black beard covering the rest of his face. When would it arrive? How would it arrive? Was it already present?

So strange to begin my excursus with a description, yet so natural to the introduction to a narrative. It's all there: I see it in my mind's eye as I survey the room as though I were there in my twentieth year, though no else will ever see the pictures of my words. Me and three others, shifting positions, looking about, scratching ourselves absently. Sniffing ...

"We're monkeys!" I exploded. "We're all monkeys!"

The hair on the back of my head literally stood on end as the realization from some incomprehensible centre within me rushed up my spine and burst over me. It's not that I didn't *know* it before, but now I *saw* it: We were four monkeys—groping, scratching, sniffing, and waiting.

I have no idea why it seemed such a wonderful insight; the others were less than profoundly impressed. "Yeah, so what?" Jarot asked. Setsuko, who usually encouraged all Jarot's thoughts, looked less than comfortable with my pronouncement.

Only Jake studied his thin, hairy paw, twisting it experimentally, and agreed with amusement: "Jeez, we sure are."

We talked about it forawhile, Setsuko wanting to know if that was "all" we were. My astonishment filled the room but I clearly did not have the words to convey it. The conversation dwindled and I felt deflated. I went around to each person in turn attempting to get them to feel "the air rise" when we talked together and to feel it fall when we abruptly ceased. In each case, as soon as we ceased our dialogue, I felt myself fall back into a kind of torpor—an animal darkness? I pondered on monkeydom and language as I settled back in my place. Then it came from the other "direction."

I felt something opening up just above my head. As it expanded, a tingling joy began to seep from me toward it. Simultaneously, my thoughts began a rapid-fire attack to prevent me from going into this "something." I tried to tell the other three that something very powerful was happening, that I knew it was good—even wonderful—but I wasn't sure I should let go and go into it. They all had some response but I recall them mainly looking disinterested. Jarot even seemed angry. Setsuko wanted to know what "it" was. Jake wanted to know what held me back.

What held me back were all the "what ifs" constructed in language. I felt as if this ecstatic opening would change me forever. It might mean insanity. It might mean an embarrassing effusion of love for my friends. It might be my death. It might ... Even attempting to explain slowly closed the circular opening in the air. Words, themselves, sealed the crack in the egg. No one understood me anyway.

Even now I feel like someone attempting to put the images of his most important night dreams into words, knowing in advance how *boring* and *foolish* such experiences seem in ordinary parlance. D. T. Suzuki (1964), the Zen interpreter, has put it this way: "Language deals with concepts and therefore what cannot be conceptualized is beyond the reach of language. When language is forced, it gets crooked, which means that it becomes illogical, paradoxical, and unintelligible from the point of view of ordinary usage of language or by the conventional way of thinking" (p. 182).

We had a pleasant day, built of our fantasies of what "a trip" ought to be. We built a bonfire on the beach, made neat sparks and spun fiery logs. And got further confused in the tangle of relationships: Setsuko thought she was following a heroic Jarot. Jake thought Setsuko was the most beautiful Japanese doll in the world. There was little evidence of what Jarot thought. I could think of nothing but what had touched me, opened then closed, yet, no matter how hard I tried, I could not imagine what my alternative had been: "Concrete experiences are valued more than mere conceptualization.

Language is secondary. In Zen, consciousness in its ordinary scientific sense has no use; the whole being must come forward" (Suzuki, p. 179).

The very next day we invited in a far more potent guest brought by Bill and Jim, the two American hippies who lived in the big cabin up the hill. Returning from one of their regular excursions across the border into Washington state, they told us we were in for a special treat. Two hours later I thought the ground on which I was lying was really *very* thin and that I was going to break through it at any second.

Setsuko had gone to the Americans' cabin to help make cabbage rolls and Jarot walked on the embankment talking about submarines to Jim. Jake noticed my dejection and asked how things were going. "I think I've lost my soul," I told him. The words had just run from me. I previously had no idea of any such thing. With the words, I fell even lower, as though the earth would open, as though I would die.

Jake stood and looked at me. "Don't say that. Don't say you've lost your soul. Do something!" And it seemed to me he looked sideways directly at the path leading up to the sunny hillock.

Then I was running up the path. I was running *to keep ahead of myself*, I think now. At that time, I was running so I could not be thought. There were thoughts, voices, clamouring in at me from all sides. They speeded up so fast the words merged and became feelings—all the private

little daily feelings that I knew so well, all the feelings that were the being called "I."

All those habitual ways of feeling, it seems to me today, must be composed of thoughts too condensed to even register as such. And all those frightened, desirous thoughts came to me from the outside, were memorized by me, and became the guardians of my subjectivity.

What happened next I know is beyond telling, but perhaps I can suggest a few crooked images: As I burst from the shade onto the sunlit crest of the hillock, the thought-feelings seemed to whirl together all at once and become one, like the streamers around a maypole winding their limits and wrapping around their central core. I felt an inner "bursting from the shade" as I rode the spiral out through the "opening" above my head. It was orgasmically sudden and powerful, but then I was out: outside of my head and into the world, and awake, it seemed, for the first time in my life.

My awakening was composed of no new sensory data. Today, the word "awareness" has much power for me because that is as close as I can come to describing my state during those hours. I was still my body but I was not inside of it—I was not enclosed in the feelings and thoughts of isolated subjectivity. I was *in* the world and *of* the world. Yes, it was like "a dream come true," because the world had all the "glory and the freshness of a dream" (Wordsworth, 1807a).

In the silencing of the inner clamour (which I had long since ceased hearing as anything but "white noise"), I was aware of the richness of the natural symphony around me. It seemed that whatever tree or bush I directed my awareness upon would come alive with the songs of birds and insects. Even stranger was that, on this summer day which had been perfectly calm, each tree or bush I *listened* to seemed to dance and quiver as an errant breeze laughed through it. In fact this "errant" breeze seemed to follow my attention wherever I took it.

But I see I am on the verge of waxing ebullient with poor poetry to crookedly express my hours awake, and among. It was a peculiarly internalized and unpoetic language which had isolated me and from which I had escaped and to which I would have to return.

Jake ambled up. He saw I was transformed and peppered me with what seemed to me foolish questions about the "afterlife" and such things. I was in the breeze and was indifferent to his questions, not even sure I understood them. But whenever I attempted to respond to my friend, Jake, I strangely could not get past two words before I had lost him. "What?" he would ask, growing irritated. "What is it you're saying?" My words were not complex. In fact, they were unadorned and simple. But there seemed to be no longer a "wavelength" or what some might call a culturally-given set of mutual understandings. He could not hear me because I had leapt through the enclosing (w)rap of mutual understandings which give words meaning.

Though I cannot conceptualize my experience satisfactorily, it was the experience, as Suzuki says above, which matters. My “whole being” had “come forward,” not just my narrational consciousness. In that sense, the experience was transcendent, but, as Suzuki cautions:

There is in every one of us, though varied in depth and strength, an eternal longing for “something” which transcends a world of inequalities. . . . “To transcend” suggests “going beyond,” “being away from,” that is, a separation, a dualism. I have, however, no desire to hint that the “something” stands away from the world in which we find ourselves. (p. 179)

My experience was transcendent into the world—which has never been as real again—not beyond it. It was, I think, a condensed *satori*, in which a pattern usually taking years was followed. Suzuki notes that

anybody, modern as well as ancient, knows very well that there is a certain critical moment in his life when he is about to start his arduous career of spiritual turmoil. When he faces this moment and goes on struggling for some years, he finds himself in a peculiar state of mentality, which borders on an utter feeling of despondency. He is sinking lower and lower, yet he knows no way to stop it or recover himself from it. The feeling has various degrees of intensity according to different temperaments. From the point of view of *satori* experience this is a good sign showing that the mind is prepared to turn away from its old way, that is, from its outward way of seeing things. (p. 192)

I certainly went “to hell” before going “to heaven.” In my case, however, “hell” was also awaiting soon after “heaven.” As the sleepiness of consciousness returned I found I had no conceptual means to explain my unexpected experience. It was, I suppose, the end of innocence for me. I spent the next years in a kind of madness, seeking a way to incorporate my “mystical participation” into my self-schema. I changed my major to

philosophy (which only added questions) and—as though daily consciousness were avenging itself—I began to think my way into the ground. I did not party and even lost interest in Lainie, my supportative girlfriend, though I did sneak some time for questions with Setsuko. I could no longer sleep at nights as my thoughts ground on, seemingly with a life of their own. No one I attempted to turn to had anything for me but dismissal.

Now, looking back, I can see my hillock enlightenment in a more Zen-like fashion as “nothing special.” I no longer pour over Eastern philosophy for “answers,” or even seek answers within our wordworlds. Yet, my experience seemed important to narrate because it is phenomenologically real and it explains both my faith in an extra-linguistic reality and the drawing power of a concept such as *anima mundi*. Lévy-Bruhl’s *participation mystique*, Kristeva’s (1989) “one differentiated,” and Hillman’s soul-making all seem to refer to the project of re-awakening to the world as I have known it, both as one and as many. In a hermeneutic project on archetypal memory, I could not betray my own experience in a world of living images by denying it, and thus giving all power to the concretizing of conceptualizations.

**§Self Deceptions.** Many of us, I fear, drown in our language-worlds. Teachers, students, and administrators in educational discourse communities are especially prey to such subjugating subjectification. Is complacency any wonder? Explanation, fact, and knowledge are thought to



be true now and always. Cultural assumption is what shapes the subject who shapes her memories. And facts become just that: recorded data, inert ideas, memories impaled.

Myths and gossip forever change form and content in the telling, and memories retain vitality only as long as they do, too. Language need not impale the imagination unless we live in databanks. Imagination, according to Bachelard (1987), needs language to find its form and “boast” its will:

How unjust is the criticism which sees nothing in language but an ossification of internal experience! Just the contrary: language is always somewhat ahead of our thoughts, somewhat more seething than our love. It is the beautiful function of human rashness, the dynamic boast of the will. . . . The will must imagine too much in order to realize enough. (p. 30)

Any writer (even this one) knows the experience of struggling to keep up with his words. Yet, words, too, can remain only socially functional within a socially functional self. *I* cannot recall my origin or see ahead to my demise. *I* exist like an electrical instant between dual poles of incomprehension. The language of this self kills reverie and imagination, perhaps why some artists cannot bear to have their biographies *imprinted*.

Language which dances away from precise literalism seeks a deeper harmony. It is the harmony of tension between opposites: but that tension must be modulated to produce harmony. The transparent self which imaginatively speaks is not a product of one *line* of self-ish memory but is instead present in the absence between speaker and listener (even imagined listener). Poetic speech is also attentive listening, and may even

give a *trace* of substance to the listener. The speaker is the listener and by being so finds the *altar* of transmutation, especially when transforming the voices of one's past. Anthropologists Langness and Frank (1981) note that

a striking feature is autobiography's *transformative* power. Through this medium, people who exist somehow on the margins of mainstream America and its values have shaped self-images of their own design. Among these, blacks, pacifists, women, expatriates, homosexuals, artists, political dissidents, and others have described their own feelings, actions, ideas, desires, relationships, aspirations, and efforts to survive—in their own words. . . . Autobiography, at its very core, is a process of self-creation. When autobiographers are conscious of this process, they can use its power in the struggle for personal freedom. For the autobiographer, and for readers influenced by published examples of people claiming the right to define themselves, autobiography can be a revolutionary act. (p. 93)

Autobiography may be revolutionary, or it may be enconceptualating.

A literal chronicle of my life would serve little purpose here, other than to concretize my identity. "I didn't know why a replicant would collect photographs," asks Deckard, the Blade Runner, wondering about androids who have come to realize their "pasts" had been implanted into them. "Maybe they needed memories" (Scott, 1982). As we hunger for totalized identities, we wish to *grasp* and *imprint* the past. Lifewriting which re-collects unchanging facts can only seek to record, not transmute. Literary lifewriting expresses all the phenomena of this life, including its fantasies and dreads, its dreams and deceptions, its psychedelic awakenings. Am I not lifewriting right now? *Am I not lying to declare these words before you as true?*

The most eloquent representation of Hermes is probably the bust with two faces: one is turned toward humans, the other toward the Gods, thus symbolizing the dual meaning of all reality, the double meaning

of all speech. The wisdom of a myth that makes Hermes the patron saint of liars as well as the God of communication is apparent, suggesting that communication and lying are part of the same archetype. (Paris, 1990, p. 62)

López-Pedraza and Paris indicate the *hermetic* quality of creative discourse—not in the sense of hermetic enclosure but in the sense of alchemical transmutation or the hermeneutic imagination (Smith, 1991). I write or speak in this vein to escape the enclosure of my social subjectivity to imagine *toward* a kind of listening: The speaking which results is a mimicry of the voices of the Muses, the daughters of Mnemosyne (the goddess, Memory), who “sometimes tell the truth, sometimes lie” (Hesiod). But this, too, is dichotomized as either/or. The intuitive act is more enigmatic, as Herakleitos understood: “*The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor conceals, but indicates*” (Frag. 93. Freeman, p. 31).

But how can I write without a sense of self from which to write? How can *I indicate* unless I tell the truth of myself, my past? Once that self is seen from the narrative position—as part of the hermeneutic circle—existing only as I tell it in the present, it becomes understood that there is no pre-existent self to be true to. Lejeune (1989) expresses the quandary of the autobiographer:

I believe that when I say “I,” it is I who am speaking: I believe in the Holy Ghost of the first person. And who doesn’t believe in it? But of course it also happens that I believe the contrary, or at least claim to believe it. . . . In the field of the subject, there is no referent. To a lesser degree, and more candidly, many autobiographers have outlined analogous strategies. We *indeed know* all this; we are not so dumb, but, once this precaution has been taken, we go on as if we did not

know it. Telling the truth about the self, constituting the self as complete subject—it is a fantasy. In spite of the fact that autobiography is impossible, this in no way prevents it from existing. (pp. 131, 132)

I imagine this writing to be *through* myself. The self I have represented as being me emerged seduced by the senses and soon became an "entity" fleeing in terror from the bliss of non-being. Over and against Other, this self becomes a being inscribed in negativity. An awakening to a *participation mystique* with the living dream of nature only returned me to a self hating its own narrative barriers. I imagined my quest as a linear journey into meaning, but now *feel* it as meaningless concentric circles around an empty centre. I, like any self, cannot remember anything before my own existence. However: "Paradoxically, in this land of forgetting there is also a remembering (which *does not* re-member)," as Taylor (1987, p. 168) enigmatically writes.

It may be my remembered memory is a fantasy and only a wish for the womb and/or the tomb, as Kristeva suggests. It may be my hours of transcendence, though actual, have brain chemistry explanations. Life need not be meaningful. And yet, if it is accepted as such, why do I (and others like Kristeva and Beckett) wish to write that "meaninglessness"? Does the self-forgetfulness involved in writing *toward* the absent listener create meaning for the "*listeners in the snow*"? Perhaps the selves in flight from "death" on the march of progress can deconstruct their memories in symbolic lifewriting—to reveal the despair of our lost souls.

Carrin Dunne (1988) agrees that memory folds around a sense of irretrievable loss. She suggests that memory first began in our early ancestors as they mourned departed loved ones. The charged coils of tension in the “creative furor” she equates with the “passions of the soul”:

Without mourning there would be no self-awareness; the act of mourning is the replication of the whole self upon itself. . . . The original folding back or mourning can be construed as an instinctive reaction to pain for which there are many analogies on the physical plane: a wincing, flinching, contracting or recoiling from hurt. The recoil of the organism has its counterpart in a recoil of the soul. An unforeseen effect of recoil is an intensification or concentration of soul, a beginning of convergence toward a center. In contrast with scientific knowing which by cutting, splitting and distinguishing achieves distance and detachment—a “cool” mode of knowing—the awareness which comes to pass through mourning has to be characterized as “hot,” a building up of energy through infolding, a birth of what has been known classically as the passions of the soul. (p. 114)

**§Labyrinths.** So, at last, the title of my tale comes back to me. If life—natural life—has a shape, it must be imagined. But, imaginatively, that shape is spiral: as in a power-coil or the double helix of the DNA. We act and create a past in expanding ripples from an empty centre. We cannot recall such an “empty centre,” of course, since it is not a part of memories (and self), but in moments of deep nameless yearning, or Heidegger’s anxiety, we may *recoil* from our natural unfolding to an *infolding*— that “remembering (which *does not* re-member).”

To reveal this absolute paradox within lifewriting, a story may be appropriate. Some of the ancestors of this mongrel soul told the tale of the

three Norns who guided the destiny of humankind toward its miraculous end by nurturing and caring for *Yggdrasil*, the Nordic Tree of Life. It is their love which makes the tree spread its foliage into unknown regions. But, as a natural metaphor, this tree has its roots down as deep as it is tall, deep into chthonic regions of the uncreated. Here the Dread Biter gnaws at the roots and is as much on the verge of destroying *Yggdrasil* as the Norns are of furthering its growth. Dunne continues the story:

The Norns give us a hint of the heaven of memory. There is also a hell counter-pointing their heaven, and figured by the Dread Biter. That memory can vacillate between such opposites has to do with the fact that at the center of human reality, indeed of *all* reality, is a no-thing, which I have called the empty place in the heart. The empty center may give rise to the most exalted religious reverence—as witnessed by the relationship to the Void (*sunyata*) in Buddhism or to the Deir, the Holy of Holies in which stood an empty throne, in Judaism—or it may inspire unmitigated terror and horror. We may see the Tree [of life] as being gradually healed and transfigured through the ministrations of the Norns, or as being slowly but surely undermined by the Dread Biter's continual gnawing at its roots. (p. 122)

Dunne seems bold in her pronouncements about reality's centre, but I feel confident in saying that I, too, know nothing. The tree of memory is also the tree of imagination, and imagination's verdant foliage can only spread as far into the abyss as deep as memory has spread its roots into it. Ch'iu-ti Liu expresses this image in "A Tree that Travels with its Roots" (1992):

*Separation is pregnant with connections.  
Trees are parted by the wind,  
and yet parts of the wind—but Listen!  
Your breath touches ten thousand plants,  
that measure the sky with their own stalks.*

*You embrace them into a chorus of the Whole:  
they belong to your songs, as your songs belong to them.*

*The same way shall you embrace your own roots.  
In your memory of swamps trembling with algae,  
you will teach your roots to walk into a tree ...*

*O Tree, O Tree, I see in you ten thousand trees,  
and you stretch into a landscape.  
You who is at home in his travelling.  
You: my first and last  
IMAGINATION.  
(original emphasis)*

Imagination may be suppressed in the name of “reality” and emerge only morbidly or pathologically, or it may be employed—with remembering—to guide us to the thresholds of our stories. By imaginative lifewriting—*toward* the silence which listens—or by sharing our stories and visions in an atmosphere of Norn-like care, we may imagine the Tree of Life to be flourishing, the palaces of the imagination to be expanding the life-space in which we commune.

Imagination, however, is not just the brave trunk and the verdant foliage. Such imagination disappears like whimsy—without a ripple. Imagination directed down—backwards, if you will—discovers the roots and nurtures their descent. Instead of the Dread Biter mangling the roots of *Yggdrasil*, it is conceivable that we may take some of the Norn love with us and nurture their re-remembering. Remembering goes against the uncoiling of nature and so brings with it anxiety and dread (but not the “terror and horror” of denial). Remembering beyond our personal histories requires active

imagination, but imagination cannot exceed itself, cannot create its own archetypes: "Every psychic process is an image and an 'imagining', otherwise no consciousness could exist..." (Jung, *CW* 11§889). Even the primordial images of "collective" memory are limited by their mode of representation—the empirical world of our senses (though there may be non-represented, intuitionist *feelings* of the "sixth" sense) We may re-member the roots, or we may re-collect the debris in the rootcellar of our palace (choose your metaphor), but we cannot imagine or remember *nothing*.

Yet, this recoil suggests a (painful) return of self-consciousness from the outer rim of the spiralling of time. Dunne suggests that a sort of *archetypal remembering*—an imaginative reverie or epistrophe—has its *source*, here and now, in that centre which is everywhere. Archetypal remembering, creative action *toward*, or listening in the silence is not a choice of self-consciousness but a *need* of the soul to "see through" self-consciousness. Archetypal remembering seems not to concretize the self but to drain it of its refrains and colours and its semblance of substantiality: A certain anxiety seems to be unavoidable!

Forgetting the self but using its *materia prima*—alchemy's "earthy materials" (Grinnell, 1973/89)—the imaginative autobiographer (or any seeking soul) *allows the unnameable to glimpse itself*. In this sense, lifewriting is the fount of all literature. Its purpose is not to recollect and "harden" the self, but to "forget" the self and begin a strange journey in an



archetypal wilderland. As Mircea Eliade (1977/92) expresses this threshold: "A strange amnesia, full of surprises—for in the void left by forgetting, all sorts of unreal personages creep in and incomprehensible events take shape" (p. 21).

What journey is this that partakes of both the coil of time and the recoil of memory? It can only be that age-old "pathless path" first ventured upon by those shamans who dreamt while awake—*The Labyrinth*:

Since the Labyrinth pattern describes a certain combination of two opposing spirals (one centripetal and one centrifugal), in general the symbol represents a relationship between involution and evolution. The myth manifests a principle of exclusion and selection. (Conty, 1992, p. 5)

The labyrinthine journey of the soul through time is here represented by Patrick Conty as the maze where creative memory opposes (yet finally augments?) synchronicity with nature. Conty continues, however, not satisfied with that image of the quest for awareness: "But is that not a prevalent theme that we can find in most myths? This sort of interpretation obtained from above does not answer the underlying question: *what is there?*"

What is *there*? In the centre of the labyrinth? Outside of it? Why, nothing. I am not going to suggest that the potential self who listens—forever deferred—somehow hints at a kind of "eternal life." All I know is the journey through time, but "Only through time time is conquered," as Eliot (1944, p. 16) oracles in *Four Quartets*.

"Conquered" may have suggestions of self as self-conquistador, but this "nothing" is just that: *there's nothing there to conquer!* The question is as meaningless as when we ask "cosmologists" what is outside or what was before the universe. All there *is* is space-time; and I would add that our knowing even this is because of our dwelling in the aforementioned "palaces of the imagination," which exist in "the only space available."

This is, course, one of the abstractions of Eliot's *Four Quartets*: In our journey through time, we may find a centre of timelessness.<sup>1</sup> By maintaining a trace (or *thread*) of self-awareness, I enter the labyrinth to seek the nothing from which I was first expelled. Using the unique jewels and *les fleurs du mal* of my own life experience—and the microversals of time—that nothing uses me for "its" awareness:

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive we started  
And know the place for the first time. (p. 59)*

This is a return/recoil: Yes, of course! But our crazy trail back has left its wondrous music and shapeshifting. We followed our Muses and heard the cries and whispers because we *cared*. We cared from our empty core. To care in this way is to "forget the self" and allow the empty place in the heart to speak. To listen in this way seems to me to be an act of love, and just as replete with uncertainty. Our labyrinthine journey may bring back to

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<sup>1</sup>Compare Heidegger's (1968) transformative path: "a circular happening through which what lies in the circle becomes exposed" (p. 18).

the void the unique, once-in-a-lifetime bargain-basement deal of a life—this life: the *materia prima* through which the Unnameable listens: “The very act of listening initiates communion with other living things. My own hunch is that some such patient listening gave birth to human language, to music and poetry, to vision and to joy” (Dunne, p. 122).

So lifewriting in my life and in my classes has meant more than a mere recounting, as though some psychoanalytic truth were awaiting discovery. Oh, such recounting may have its place, especially for those complacent or youthful selves who have never yet *realized* their stories. But others are ready to permeate the ego and expand the palace of the imagination in which they dream a life.

In my story, I feel that sense of self often shimmer and I await the fantasies, ruminescences, and dreads which will certainly inundate. I seek solitude at such times, but it would not be honest to say I was alone. As Mary Doll has expressed: “Objects, images, mirages, dreams, hallucinations, ghosts, voices—these mantic speakings come from the soul. In order for their prophetic voices to acquire meaning, however, the viewer must let go habituated patterns of perceiving” (p. 14). If I am alone, I am alone with the ancient myths, the archetypal presences, which are the shape of imagination.

This before you, I submit, is lifewriting—more fantasy than fact, no doubt. Yet it is such written fantasy which I am suggesting deepens and nourishes life by connecting us to the epistrophe of archetypal memory.

Imagining or remembering within concentric circles suggests it makes no difference whether it is directed forward or backward, up or down, outer or inner. To avoid building castles in the sky instead of grounded palaces of the imagination, however, it seems to me profoundly more important to understand imagining as a kind of remembering than remembering as a kind of imagining. In this way, we will not forget our primordial roots:

Considered as a dynamic image, the root assumes the most diverse powers. It is both a sustaining force and a terebrant force. At the border of two worlds, the air and the earth, the image of the root is animated paradoxically in two directions, depending on whether we dream of a root bearing to heaven the juices of the earth, or of a root going to work among the dead, for the dead. . . . (Bachelard, p. 84)

By remembering to the edge of our wordworlds, to the abyss  
 “Wherefrom words turn back,/Together with the mind not having attained...”  
 (*Tattiriya Upanishad* 2.9, in Campbell, 1968, p. 6) there is the possibility of bringing some life-energy to the seam between two worlds (only one of which can be said to exist). That trace to which the artist of a life is drawn is what I have flamboyantly called an “ectoplasmic listener.” The term suggests both the deferment of actual presence and the cessation of resistance to the “pure serene of memory” which becomes without content. Dunne opens out the implications: “If we equate the lowering of resistance to the process of remembering, then what we remember is not only the past but all of time (past, present, and future), not only time but also eternity” (p. 116).

Dunne suggests above that eternity itself may be remembered, much like the bliss—later called death—which I, however, cannot. Lifewriting is

worthwhile indeed if such remembering is possible! Can the listening trace transcend life? The paradoxes only multiply when attempts are made to encompass the "circumference which is nowhere." *Eternity is already forgotten.*

Perhaps D. H. Lawrence, a writer from his life's obsessions, expresses the paradox best by describing my self-revenant as "The Ship of Death"

(1932):

*We are dying, we are dying, so all we can do  
is now to be willing to die, and to build the ship  
of death to carry the soul on the longest journey.*

*There is no port, there is nowhere to go  
only the deepening blackness darkening still  
blacker upon the soundless, ungurgling flood  
darkness at one with darkness, up and down  
and sideways utterly dark, so there is no direction any more.  
and the little ship is there; yet she is gone.  
She is not seen, for there is nothing to see her by.  
She is gone! gone! and yet  
somewhere she is there.  
Nowhere!*

The labyrinth contains and is contained by this "nowhere." Do I enter it to rediscover timelessness then return into time, or do I journey in *creating time*, only to return to timelessness? You, the listener, must tell me your version. It is only between us that the thread can be unwound as I disappear into self-forgetfulness. And it is only with you on the other end that I can ever hope to return to myself again: for the first time, of course.

## **Chapter 6: Coda**

*through spiral upon spiral of the shell of memory that yet connects us*  
(H.D., "The Flowering of the Rod," Casey, 1987b, p. ix)

*We must lay in waiting for ourselves. Throughout our lives.*  
*Abandoning the pretense that we know.*

(William F. Pinar, Toward a Poor Curriculum, p. viii)

**§Memory, Myth, and Methods.** To conclude this exploration into memory, I feel impelled to describe how I apply this work in my limited experience with classes in autobiography. Vital to any approach to autobiography as a curricular method is the understanding of memory and directly related to memory, perhaps to the point of identity, is the sense of self. My own work has thus far been with undergraduate education students so has been limited by the large class size and by the lack of professional experience.

To invoke within my students the sense of seeking for memory with as few preconceptions as possible I have employed unusual approaches, both in writing assignments and in classroom conversation. For dialogue, I have been inspired by the work of Haroutunian-Gordon (1991) and my *feel* for listening has come from the suggestions of Felman (1982) and Dunne (1988). Learning to imagine myself as a needed listening spirit—an ectoplasmic listener—seems to have encouraged students to reflect deeply and speak freely, and to limit my vocal suggestions.

For methods, my debt is mainly to Richard Butt who inspired me in his own class and whose methods have been described elsewhere (Butt, 1990; Butt, Raymond, Yamagishi, 1988). But I have freely adapted methods suggested by my own imagination and the work of recent psychoanalysis, especially that of Mary Watkins (1976, 1990).

Early work in autobiography in curriculum openly acknowledged its debt to psychoanalysis. Grumet in the mid-seventies saw "*currere* as an application of ego psychology" and explained that she and Pinar were "looking at the contributions of both consciousness and the unconscious to the structures of the ego" (1976a, p. 113). The terminology is frankly psychoanalytic, but such terms as "ego" and "unconscious" have become a part of the public lexicon. Grumet (1976a) understood that the

theory and practice of psychoanalysis may also be viewed as a double metaphor. It is a discipline that combines the specificity and symbolic ambiguity of literature with the generalities and recurring patterns of the social sciences. It is a bridge between the arts and the sciences and offers us an approach and a vocabulary that allows us to speak of human development in both its general and most individual aspects. Its theory, from its earliest to its most recent formulations, is concerned with polarities, its practice rooted in dialogue. (p. 112)

Though she goes on to enunciate her own "metaphorical" psychoanalytic approach superseding many of the basic conceptions of Freud, Grumet continues his basic dialogic format and the concern with mediating opposites (or polarities). Freud, however, was concerned with cure or at least with control—sometimes his own—and Grumet, at least in this

essay, seems to emphasize developmental mediation, if not outright liberation.

The basic conflict of the human psyche was early called by Freud (1900/65) that between the ego and the libido, the latter of which was considered the cause of anxiety and dangerous to civilized life. Later Freud saw the ego as a mediator between the id and the social conscience of the superego. The id, at least in the popular imagination, became raw instinct—Lacan's *real*— and thus a threat.

One of Freud's major theses was that neurosis is the result of repression of instinct without sublimation into some other activity, yet he seemed often to agree with the above libelling of the id, especially in his understanding of the social role of education:

Let us make ourselves clear as to what the first task of education is: The child must learn to control his instincts. It is impossible to give him liberty to carry out all his impulses without restriction. . . . Accordingly, *education must inhibit, forbid and suppress* and this is abundantly seen in all periods of history. But we have learnt from analysis that precisely this suppression of instincts involves the risk of neurotic illness. . . . Thus education has to find its way between the Scylla of non-interference and the Charybdis of frustration. . . . An optimum must be discovered which will enable education to achieve the most and damage the least. . . . A moment's reflection tells us that hitherto education has failed its task very badly and has done children great damage. (quoted in Felman, 1982, p. 24. Felman's italics)

According to the orthodox view, then, the id or the instincts must be held in check in order to attend to our scholastic duties. Surely everyone who has been a student or holds any institutional position has experienced



this conflict, and the successful do *seem* to be those who "inhibit, forbid and suppress."

I take this as the starting point of the first writing assignment for my students. I am not concerned with the most recent research or the metaphysical validity of the ego and the id, but I am concerned that, by Freud's definition, the ego is the only complex which has a voice (1900/65). It has derived its vocabulary from the outside in, or, to put it another way, from the superego or conscience. Often when we talk to ourselves in an encouraging or reprimanding way, we reunite ego with its source and speak to our recalcitrant or wayward inner being in the second person. Somewhat playfully, then, I assign a dialogue for them to write "between the ego and the id," the id being given the nominative "I" as well as the ego or superego. Even more playfully, I remind them of the old cartoons where a little demon with the cartoon character's face stands on one shoulder of the bewildered animated animal and incites, "Do it!" Simultaneously, the other shoulder is occupied by an angelic being with a similar face cautioning, "No, don't: Never, never!"

It's an assignment hardly fair to the complexities of Freud, but, for me, its seeming frivolity hides the fact that students in a classroom tend to speak as students in a classroom—very conscious of who and where they are and speaking primarily with the ego's approval-seeking voice. The assignment brings upon them the necessity for the repressed "other" in them to speak,

even if they insist on the weakness, foolishness, appetite, or nihilism of that other. I encourage a stance which is fair to the id by reminding them that the id is a powerful energy-source so it is not being deployed in the wish to sleep through class. "The id," I tell them, "represents your earliest yearnings, your most powerful wishes; it is not concerned with order or propriety."

Some would see this as the Dionysian opposing the Apollonian, and this is certainly a functional perspective. Dionysos is the god of masks, including the masks of students, and it seems to me necessary for the students to loosen the bindings on their student-masks for other potentials to emerge. Grumet does not go so far in her recommendations, but she intimates that the id is more than bestial instincts by generalizing it as the "internal nonego," or unconscious (1976a). The id, for me, is a usable concept to open the doors of memory and awareness and its name is left for others to debate. My class is not an attempt to unleash libido or open the storm cellar of the unconscious, but perhaps it may be said that I encourage students to remember primal wishes so they may be closer to the well of life.

The classroom itself provides enough inhibitions that nothing monstrous arises from the "demon on the shoulder" (so far). It is a successful assignment if a student perceives that her daydreams (as well as her night dreams) are manifestations of repressed or postponed wishes. This is basic Freudianism, but my purpose is for the student to *remember herself*, as a perspective from which to continue our lifewriting.

Freud may wish to continue educational repression and Brown (1959, 1966) may wish for the unrepressed, desublimated classroom, but I am in agreement with Grumet that the teacher in an autobiographical classroom need neither be oppressor nor erotic accomplice.

Though the term *currere* (Pinar, 1974; Pinar, Grumet, 1976) is no longer in use by Grumet, Pinar continues to use it for the continuous process of deconstruction and reconstruction an architect of self must go through (1992b). Grumet (1976a) used *currere* to define her positioning of the teacher as "respondent" and not as analyst, which indicates her belief that autobiography and journal-keeping are self-developmental processes and not conceptual inundations or libidinal parades. Freud, however, saw himself in possession of the truths of the human mind and insisted his patients recognize this (Freud, 1963). They were required to accept his conceptual inundation and to understand him in the position of "the subject who knows."

Shoshana Felman (1982), a previous student of the late neo-Freudian, Jacques Lacan, reports that Lacan felt that it is the placing of oneself in the transcendent position of "one who knows" which brings about the transference or projection phenomena:

"As soon as there is somewhere a subject presumed to know, there is transference," writes Lacan (S-XI, 210).

Since "transference is the acting out of the reality of the unconscious" (S-XI, 150), teaching is not a purely cognitive, informative experience, it is also an emotional, erotical experience. "I deemed it necessary," insists Lacan, "to support the idea of

transference, as indistinguishable from love, with the formula of the subject presumed to know. I cannot fail to underline the new resonance with which this notion of knowledge is endowed. The person in whom I presume knowledge to exist, thereby acquires my love." (S-XX, 64) (Lacan is quoted from S-XI, 210: *Le Séminaire, livre XI: Les Quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil, 1973, p. 210. S-XI, 150, and S-XX, 64: *Le Séminaire, livre XX: Encore*, Paris: Seuil, 1975, p. 64. In Felman, 1982, p. 35)

Yet all our lives we have encountered teachers who were self-presented as "subjects presumed to know." Of those, the ones remembered most deeply have been as the result of a powerful projection or interchange of emotion. They may have been very bad teachers indeed, and the reason for their memory is the bitter disgust left behind at their pretensions. This leads me to my second writing assignment: "Teachers Who Left Their Mark: The Good, the Bad, and the Indifferent."

Having given voice to the other within my students in assignment one, I now attempt to engage their memories on significant others from the pedagogical realm, so they may reconceive their modelling behaviors or their aversion to a particular person from their past who strongly affected the way they think and feel as learners and as people. The teacher need not have been positive and need not have been encountered within the institutions of education. I suppose my outlook is still Freudian here in that I wish for my writers to re-cognize some of the persons internalized in them as complexes. My outlook may also be seen as Lacanian in that I hope they will penetrate their opaque projections and discover their teaching model is also

an uncertain learner like themselves, or that the brand-X teacher made himself into one by his insistence on the finality of his knowledge.

My class would also be well into keeping journals by now to which I respond privately and individually. They would be hearing stories and opinions from each other in classroom dialogue and getting to know one another somewhat. Some students resist encountering the “other” of their repressed self. Others resist encountering the formative “others” of the outside world who have been introjected into complexes—guides or shadows—within them. At the point where ideas are exchanged in class, still others reject as unacceptably “other” the voice and opinions of fellow class members. At this point I turn to C. G. Jung to understand this refusal of the right of voice in others:

The present day shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other man's argument count, although this capacity is a fundamental and indispensable condition for any human community. Everyone who proposes to come to terms with himself must reckon with this basic problem. For, to the degree that he does not admit the validity of the other person, he denies the “other” within himself the right to exist—and vice versa. The capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone for outer objectivity. (1971, p. 297)

My third writing assignment is “Turning-Points: Autobiographical Traces,”<sup>1</sup> when I ask the students to pick a duration of time from their pasts, long or short, and describe how they underwent a change of perspective in that period. This change may have been brought about involuntarily—

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<sup>1</sup>I take the term “autobiographical trace” from a 1991 summer workshop with Professors J. Daignault and W. F. Pinar.

something happened to them—or they may have quietly seen through a deception, or made a decisive move toward a new destination, or simply evaporated some long-standing necessity. Many students say they cannot think of any time that things changed, but others freely survey the past ignoring no joy and fearing no pain.

I insist that historicity is of no concern to us here. I tell them that it is better to let the memory come to them than to simply pull it from the file and recite it. This step is very similar to the first step advanced by Pinar in the *currere* method, where he suggests employing the Freudian method of free-association to let the memory speak: “The first step of the method of *currere* is the regressive, the free associative remembrance of the past. We work to excavate the present by focusing on the past, work to get underneath my everyday interpretation of what I experience and enter experience more deeply” (Pinar, ix. Pinar & Grumet, 1976).

The well of the past—memory—is very deep and leads to the most philosophical part of educational autobiography, so I will consider that covered by the previous chapters. It may be enough to note that only Freud insisted on the facts, that for Jung and for Grumet, the past is shrouded in a halo of fantasy presently projected and it is in such guise that it returns and directly participates in the present moment. Grumet (1976a) explains:

In order to compensate for this tendency to judge one's own behavior and to couch those judgments in absolutes, *currere* encourages an “as if” orientation that regards autobiography ... neither as pure fiction nor as pure truth. The autobiographical story stands somewhere

between personal myths and personal fictions. The myth is the story that permeates a culture, a tradition, a family, a school. We take it up and live it without realizing that the story persists only because we have chosen to tell it. If the myth comes to us from without, our fictions come from within; we are conscious of their creation and of ourselves as their source. Every autobiography is both someone else's story and our own. We reread our own stories to find the mythic-fictive threads that we have woven through them. By making our students aware that their self-representations are not factual, absolute renderings of what really happened, we hope that our students will assume a more permissive and relativistic form of minding, making it possible to review an event or action in one's life history without at the same repudiating it or affirming it. Our focus is the present, the storyteller's view of the world and of himself as revealed in his story, rather than the actual event. (pp. 134, 135)

With this view of autobiography as the understanding of the "mythic-fictive threads" of memory, we have gone beyond Freud in his insistence on ferreting out "the truth according to Freud" to Lacan (1977) who seems to consider knowledge forever incomplete. We have gone into the structure of story-making and seen the face of other possibilities: Jung's inner complexes, the "others" of the anima or animus, the shadow, and the archetypes of the collective unconscious emerge as mythic beings in their own right with the potential for delusion or dialogue.

In other words, if I lean more toward the mythic/fictive and provoke imagination into action, I have called up the resources of the most creative of the post-Jungian schools, archetypal psychology (chapter 4). Archetypal psychology considers the creative imagination to be the principle of life in the active instant. Archetypal memory evokes figures who are imagined as beings which guide the imagination into seemingly timeless forms and

relations. The basis for its psychoanalysis is not science, but poetry and the arts, and mythology:

The major move of archetypal psychology is that it places itself in a poetic tradition and essays a psychology of the imagination, a psychology which originates neither in cerebral physiology, ego psychology, nor behavioral analysis, but in the workings of the poetic imagination. Archetypal psychology assumes a poetic and mythological basis of mind. (Kugler, 1978, p. 136)

My final major writing assignment takes license from this amorphous school and combines some of the ideas of the first three papers into a product which is, hopefully, both imaginative and positively decentering. Poetic memory from assignment 3 is activated, the complexes from assignment 2 may be awakened, and the inner dialogue of assignment 1 is re-employed. I now assign them, however, an *imaginal dialogue*. Using the work of archetypal psychologists Michael Perlman (1988) and Mary Watkins (1976, 1990), I attempt to allow themselves to sense the many beings in their one. This is remembering through the patterns of emotion and fantasy already present in the individual, but now this remembering gives these patterns identity and voice. It is what Hillman (1979a) has called epistrophe.

Perlman's interests lie mainly in the place of the imaginal and Watkins is concerned with giving voice to the imaginal beings we already subtly experience. Watkins and Perlman derive the term "imaginal" from the Islamic scholar, Henry Corbin. As Watkins (1990) explains:

Corbin rejects the word "imaginary" when referring to these phenomena because in modern non-premeditated usage the "imaginary" is contrasted with the "real". . . . By using the term



"imaginal," Corbin hopes to undercut the real-unreal distinction, and to propose instead that the imaginal not be assessed in terms of a narrowed conception of "reality," but a broader one which gives credence to the reality of the imaginal. (p. 4)

In such dialogues, the "I" position is transferred to whatever characters the person-as-narrator feels needs to be heard. It is less a making-up of personae than a recognition that we are always already involved in dialogues within, that we are—as a value, if not in fact—dialogic beings: "Before one becomes aware of the characters within thought and action, one often successively identifies with them, unconsciously becoming one and then another" (Watkins, p. 168). In intonations and private soliloquys we act out "the abandoned child," "the jealous wife," or "repressed Socrates." The method does not seek to transfer knowledge but to discover it through dialogues, dialogues in which, as Watkins would have it, we already engage:

Side by side and woven through our dialogues with our neighbors, these imaginal dialogues persist. We may find ourselves speaking with our reflection in the mirror, with the photograph of someone we miss, with a figure from a dream or a movie, with our dog. And even when we are outwardly silent, within the ebb and flux of our thought, we talk with critics, with our mothers, our god(s), our consciences; indeed we do so just as steadily as we once spoke to our dolls, our imaginary companions, the people of our painted pictures. We may find ourselves as audience or as narrator to conversations among imaginal others—others not physically present but actually experienced nonetheless. At times we may even notice ourselves playing more than one role in these imaginal dialogues: now child, now old one, abandoned one. (p. 2)

Each persona assumed, it should be noted, seems to carry along its own baggage into the form of narrational memories. There are such vast seams of wealth to be mined from such a complex weave of memories!

I have another minor writing assignment which involves fictitious journal entries from 20 or 30 years down the line: one entry from the self they most fear they will become, and another from the ideal self. Both describe who they are, *their place*, and who surrounds them.

These, then, are the psychoanalytic traditions I consciously apply—going from Freud, through Jung, to the mythic archetypalists. It should be noted that I also consciously bear in mind the pedagogic guidelines originally suggested by Butt and Pinar and Grumet.

Moving briefly into the area of my general attitude as a teacher of autobiography, I do not think any of the three psychoanalytic areas mentioned above convey my openness to the task at hand. I do not psychoanalyze my students whatsoever, not in terms of childhood repression, collective archetypes, or the inner myth. I do not pretend to be “the subject presumed to know”—I often tell my stories, too—and in this way usually avoid the complications of transference or of students seeking a father-confessor. When I respond to students’ journal writings, I limit myself to encouraging further self-seeking, but I never judge and rarely give advice. As respondent, I am not “Father Freud,” just as Grumet has made plain:

The respondent is not attempting to modify entrenched structures of narcissistic character disorders, nor to break down ego defenses

formed to allay overwhelming instinctual impulses. Working with groups of students, the respondent has neither the time nor the training to participate in the transferences that characterize the therapeutic relationship. (1976a, p. 140)

By not being the omniscient possessor of knowledge, I do not therefore become an “anti-pedagogue,” trying to undo the harm of the other curricula. I perceive myself as teaching in the manner of Socrates:

*Meno:* Can you tell me Socrates, if virtue can be taught? Or is it not teachable but the result of practice, or is it neither of these, but men possess it by nature?

*Socrates:* ... You must think me happy indeed if you think I know whether virtue can be taught. . . . I am so far from knowing whether virtue can be taught or not that I do not even have any knowledge of what virtue itself is.

.....  
*Meno:* Yes, Socrates, but how do you mean that we do not learn, but that what we call learning is recollection? Can you teach me how this is so?

*Socrates:* ... Meno, you are a rascal. Here you are asking me to give you my “teaching”, I who claim that there is no such thing as teaching, only recollection. ( Plato, *Meno*. In Felman, p. 21)

Felman's experience is that psychoanalysis and pedagogy never have been separate discourses. They have always had mixed elements: “As myself both a student of psychoanalysis and a teacher, I would here like to suggest that the lesson to be learnt about pedagogy from psychoanalysis is less that of ‘the *application* of psychoanalysis to pedagogy’ than that of the *implication* of psychoanalysis in pedagogy and of pedagogy in psychoanalysis” (p. 26). She goes on to explain that both Lacanian pedagogy and Lacanian psychoanalysis proceed through a very different temporality than the conventional linear—cumulative and progressive—

temporality of learning, as it has traditionally been conceived by pedagogical theory and practice:

Proceeding not through linear progression, but through breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action, the analytic learning-process puts indeed in question the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectibility, the progressistic view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge. (Felman, p. 27)

The discovery of the unconscious should have ended the fantasy of a progression of knowledge toward some ideal end some time ago. If we are each understood as possessing, or, better, being possessed by an unconscious, then we each “hide” most of that which we know—though “slips of the tongue” and dreams reveal that knowledge. In Lacan’s terms, the unconscious is “knowledge which can’t tolerate one’s knowing that one knows” (Lacan, Seminar, Feb. 19, 1974, unpublished. Felman, p. 28). This seems to imply a purposeful kind of forgetting. This is like Freud’s unconscious but with a theory of signs attached, so that we always mean more than we say: “The discovery of the unconscious ... is that the implications of meaning infinitely exceed the signs manipulated by the individual” (Lacan, S-II, p. 150. In Felman, p. 28). Everything remembered includes something unremembered which is unintentionally implied. This is to say that human knowledge is *untotalizable*.

Ignorance in this approach is perceived as active repression “with the imperative to forget—the imperative to exclude from consciousness, to not admit to knowledge” (Felman, p. 29). Recalling Socrates, then, with his

insistence as of learning being recollection: "Teaching, like analysis, has to deal not so much with *lack* of knowledge as with *resistances* to knowledge" (p. 30).

Personally, I prefer the Jungian dynamic which suggests that we, ourselves, are splinter creations over an unconscious of inconceivable depth to the idea of an unconscious brought into creation through the Freudian dynamic of repression. In terms of pedagogical interaction in autobiographical sessions, however, the ultimate theory chosen makes no difference. In class or in therapy, Jung or Lacan likely would understand knowledge not as a substance but as a structural dynamic which reveals itself in the interplay of dialogue in which each speaker says more than he knows. As Felman puts it:

Like the analyst, the teacher, in Lacan's eyes, cannot in turn be, alone, a *master* of the knowledge which he teaches. Lacan transposes the radicality of analytic dialogue—as a newly understood structure of insight—into the pedagogical situation. This is not simply to say that he encourages "exchange" and calls for students' interventions—as many other teachers do. Much more profoundly and radically, he attempts to *learn from the students his own knowledge*. (p. 32)

In this situation, for analysts and teachers, there can be no "subject presumed to know." This obliterates the imperatives of the expert not in the practical terms of the good of society or useful to further one's career, but in terms of Lacan's idea of the theoretic mode of "*self-subversive self-reflection*" (Felman, p. 39). I understand this to mean a sort of undercutting of the conscious ego to the *use* of becoming aware of oneself through action—both

speaking and writing—with others.

Without the rationalizing, projecting, condemning, bombastic ego-centre struggling for control of any situation, one is put into a situation of silence. I do not mean here apathetic inaction, but a silence of attuned listening. From this listening silence one's own voice may be heard to speak—ironic and exposed—as that of an “other” attempting to tune in to the rhythms which surround it, as interesting and alien as all voices.

I often—and I think many of us do—become unconscious in intense discussion as my words gush forth inspired or dwindle to a confused trickle to be suddenly inundated by the inspired estuary of some other voice. Often the explicit meaning of such words is lost in what seems to me like some primeval conjuring of unrealized forces.

The water-imagery—gushing, trickling, murmuring—seems appropriate for this listening speech (appropriate to both pedagogy and psychoanalysis) as it suggests the flow and intermingling which take place when no one is a “subject presumed to know” and everyone's shared ignorance is a kind of mutual teaching. This is an ideal, of course, but one, I think, worth listening for.

**§Conclusion?** It is time to look back over the twisted terrain of this essay to see if we can discern any patterns within the labyrinth of paths which have been followed. Vital to the project of autobiography in curriculum are several

questions which, at this point, seem to remain questions. This chapter is entitled "Coda" rather "Conclusion" to indicate the journey has not reached an end, that the questions produce more questions, which will, in turn evoke responses unique to each person's subjective environment.

It should be clear by now that I feel one's ontological predispositions determine what type of information will be termed acceptable, what type of experience will be termed real, and what type of self will be honoured as true or authentic. The naturalistic fallacy which presupposes that only the objective world of sense data be named as universally real and true has imposed a certain value system on inappropriate areas. It is this fallacy which wishes to know the developmental worth of explorations in memory or, for that matter, autobiography in curriculum.

Theorists of development, however, do not study simply what is, but what should be. Mary Watkins (1976, 1990) feels that children do not reveal a natural process of development to researchers but only the extent to which they have been enculturated into such processes. She recognizes only that physiological development in general follows some pattern. "Beyond this rudimentary level of development, however, we find that values organize the preferred telos" (1990, p. 80). Watkins suggests not a truer ontological predisposition but a valuing of the "imaginal" aspects of experience which have been devalued and pathologized in our modern worldview: "The value and power of this imaginal reality has been severely circumscribed, and at

times castrated, by the presuppositions of the modern scientific outlook which our developmental psychology shares" (p. 173). In her view, there are other aspects of memory and self to value:

If we follow the lines of development I have been suggesting we find ourselves rehearsing not for Piaget's scientific audience, not for actual social discourse, and not for action or a harsh [Freudian] reality, but rather ... for imaginal life itself—that other life where we are also housed, clothed, cared for. That other life of dialogue also creeps into our gestures, our turns of phrase, the very structure of our thought, just as surely as it presents itself in our dreams and waking dreams, in art and poetry, novels, and prayer. (p. 83)

The value of what we do in curriculum, then, may be found in our life values themselves. If we value creativity and even pluralistic awareness, the kind of explorative autobiographical writing which has been suggested and portrayed throughout this paper must be taken seriously.

Taking it seriously has been one of the motivations of this paper. Some questions remain whose answers must be at least more firmly approached. In our narrations of the past, how much freedom do we have in the present to change that which has gone by? I am not referring here to misrepresentation but the power of transformation available to the "architect of self" (Pinar, 1992b) to construct or deconstruct the memories which constitute the self.

William Casey's (1987b) much-cited study of memory's "thick autonomy"—as found, for example, in body memory, place memory, and commemoration—seems to indicate a depth of memory beyond reach of the self-who-remembers. "In depicting memory as autonomous in this



immersionist mode, we court the danger of losing ourselves in our own description, our sense of intact self-identity may dissolve" (p. 289). Casey seems to backtrack from this position to claim a "bi-directionality" (p. 291) for memory. He cites Lacan's aphorism "what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming" to claim autonomy also for the self: "I am free to reconstruct and reconstrue what I have experienced: there is no set script for my life as I elect to remember it" (p. 291).

Whitehead (1978) makes explicit reference to this bi-directionality of freedom in his metaphysics of unfolding occasions and denies the possibility of complete freedom in the present over the past and thus the future: "But there is no such fact as absolute freedom; every actual entity possesses only such freedom as is inherent in the primary phase 'given' by its standpoint of relativity to its actual universe. Freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other" (133). According to Whitehead, we are inexorably involved with the past, although the past is "creative" in that its near-infinite objective occasions can be brought together into the process of a present concrescence—and each objective occasion still contains the memory of its own creative concrescence. Casey's freedom "to reconstruct and reconstrue" is limited by both efficient causation and the *telos* of the eternal objects. How free are we to "create" the past?

This sounds like the type of narrative freedom claimed by some cognitive psychologists such as Bruner (1987) and which seems to be

implicit in the "collaborative autobiography" approach of Butt, Raymond, and Yamagishi (1988), Butt and Raymond (1989), and Butt, Townsend, and Raymond (1990). Memorial freedom may also be implied in the work of Grumet (1991), not to seek greater facticity but "in order to diminish coherence and the ideologies that accompany stories" (p. 108). Presumably, while Butt et al. seek the freedom for teachers to interpret their memories in a manner which enriches and improves their professional lives, Grumet seeks such freedom to find an openness and receptivity in self-creation similar to that described above by Watkins (1991) as "that other life ... of art and poetry, novels, and prayer" (p. 83). And, one might add, political awakening.

Pinar's (1992b) "architect of self" concept is more complex, involving as it does both construction and deconstruction: "Only via deconstruction can a reformulation of self begin" (p. 395). He remains somewhat murky, however, on just what such deconstruction implies. It seems more often than not to be a psychoanalytic project which takes apart the pieces of self—as found in memories, for example—to examine them in isolation and put them back together in a less enclosed, schematized, and self-deluding manner. In this, he sometimes seems to consider his architectural deconstruction to be a teardown meant especially for certain types, such as "the inflated ego of the (often male) corporate personality" (p. 395).

The "reformulation of self"—despite our schematized delusions of a solid, unitary self extending into the future—is precisely what is always

occurring, according to ideas involved in Bergson's duration, Whitehead's process, and the more recent formulations of an intersubjective self. Kirby (1991) indicates the self is always in the process of self-narration, and can never be complete. As indicated, Hillman portrays the self and its enclosing memories to be a mask which must "seen through" to "face the gods" and cure our narcissism (1980, 1989b).

Krell (1990), as a post-structuralist, feels that the self to which we adhere is always deferred, or absent. It is that which we are "on the verge" of becoming, or remembering, but never can, just as the present itself is deferred. Deconstruction, for Krell, is the discovery of the actuality of the self—in its non-actuality. Krell seems to imply that a more acute present awareness is possible only through the receptivity to a self *always already* in the process of deconstruction, and such deconstruction is not merely a psychoanalytic deflation of the stuffed-shirts of our world.

On the other hand, Pinar's version of psychoanalysis seems more to resemble that of the post-structuralist Lacan than that of Freud, Jung, or Adler, especially when he avers to a self composed of both an ego-consciousness and an unconscious constructed like a language. The Lacanian unconscious consists, however, of the unsaid or unspeakable:

Even when authentic and learned, it is a self we cannot be confident we know, because it is always in motion and in time, defined in part by where it is not, when it is not, what it is not. The self who welcomes the dawn is a self constantly expanding to incorporate what it fears and resists as well as what it desires. (Pinar, 1992b, p. 410)

This brings to mind Gilbert Durand (1976) whom I quoted in chapter 4 as saying: "For the sorcerer it is always dawn" (p. 102). Pinar's architect may not be a sorcerer but, when s/he is not understood as self-therapist, s/he may represent an allusion to the as yet unknown—and perhaps unknowable—"entity" of the deconstructed self.

I have been indicating throughout this paper how we are constructed as masks over an unfathomable abyss, masks whose faith in the given reality is dependent on the strength of intersubjective recognition, of one mask's acknowledgement by another. For masks—often narrative schemata—to see through each other and themselves, they must deconstruct such cultural schemata and be receptive to that "unspeakable" abyss. In other words, a deconstructed self, and, perhaps, an architect of self, may be similar to the "self-revenant" or "ectoplasmic listener" of chapter 5. Such a self is not really a self at all in the manner in which it has been culturally defined—"a locus where discourses intersect" (Nussbaum, 1988, p. 149)—but more resembles a *bodily* point of awareness between such intersection and the abyss—or "Absolutely Other" (Derrida, 1992).

Such a position is no observable position. For Durand, such a "life is, to say the least, an exile" (p. 99). Such thoughts complexify the influence of the unspeakable other, as it manifests between words, in nuance and gesture, and perhaps in synchronicity and fate. Casey finally leans far from such ancient determinisms and eternal returns and grants the self a

democratic kind of freedom he calls "in-gathering": "Far from being fated, then, my character is altogether an expression of my free remembering in its in-gathering power" (p. 296).

Casey's in-gathering seems Ricoeurian, according to Krell (1990), and Krell much prefers Nietzsche's recognition and affirmation of fate: "I wanted to oppose the affirmation of eternal recurrence and *amor fati* to what Paul Ricoeur was calling 'consent,' a word that seemed lukewarm and saccharine, whereas Nietzsche's was fire and wine" (p. xii). In this case, the freedom to remember may be more akin to a freedom to *dismember* the shared delusions which keep us hovering in our "reality" (Lacan, 1977) over the unfathomable circumlocutions of the abyss.

I have attempted an elucidation throughout of what it means to deconstruct the self's memories and to willingly succumb to the Dionysian body and to a position at the mythic doorway of something suggested, but not encompassed, by Jung's notion of a collective unconscious. This "position" is somewhat distinguished from a *participation mystique* by being paradoxically aware of its emplacement and aware of the varied *personae*, with variable emotions and memories, available to enact.

Krell (1989) criticizes Casey for falling back on the metaphysical tradition of presence by accepting "freedom" as a sort of *essence*. "It is not a matter of oversight," Krell says. "It is perhaps a matter of profound oblivion at the heart of our remembering" (p. 268). He notes that Casey must separate

memory from narrative, from the narrative self, to hold his position. For Krell, there is neither freedom in remembering nor truth. Because memory arises from the unknowable abyss of the eternal return, it is we who are remembered. My personal memories elide into the Great Memory, the *Spiritus Mundi* of Yeats (1916): "Which means that memory's autonomy finds me always only on the verge of remembering, even when I am in the thick of memory" (Krell, 1989, p. 271).

What is the content of the "Great Memory" or the hovering anxiety of "fate"? Self cannot remember beyond itself so there can be no content per se. Instead, there can only be the "forgetting of self" previously alluded to with reference to Nietzsche by way of Krell. The change may perhaps be the much touted metamorphosis of this paper. This transmutation is not a part of the plan of developmental psychology, but is more to do with *amor fati* or what Hillman (1983b) calls soul: "Soul is the point. It's not to further, to lubricate adaptation, to make it slide along better. It's more a matter of evoking the sense of individuality which comes with death, with fate. My death. It's very hard to stay with that" (p. 63).

This is where I find archetypal psychology and some post-structuralist angles meet: in a kind of *anarchitecture* of self (chapter 1). Soul, for Hillman, is an attitude into death, but it is a land of the dead "peopled" with images as he portrays in *The Dream and the Underworld* (1979a). This polytheistic land of the dead later becomes his *via negativa* to the world soul (1989a)

and here he finds himself siding with Lacan and Derrida against the earlier monopoly of interpretation found in hermeneutics: "Hermeneutics is monotheistic. I guess what Lacan and those Yalies, those Frenchies, have been trying to do with their destructuralizing is getting hermeneutics off of its monotheistic basis and into a kind of talking back to the image that is as 'crazy,' as polytheistic, as the image itself" (p. 57).

With soul, metamorphosis, and fate, we find ourselves back in the labyrinth from which we had sought to extricate ourselves in the last chapter. Is this all talk, all empty theorizing going against the ineluctable evidence of Prigogine and Stengers for the irreversibility of time? This question was dealt with at length in chapter 3, but here let it suffice to say that even Prigogine and Stengers were not content with the one-way road of time leading to the inevitable disordering of energy found in entropy. They quote Freeman Dyson from a 1971 *Scientific American* article proposing a potential alternative:

It is conceivable however that life may have a larger role to play than we have yet imagined. Life may succeed against all of the odds in molding the universe to its own purpose. And the design of the inanimate universe may not be as detached from the potentialities of life and intelligence as scientists of the twentieth century have tended to suppose. (1984, p. 117)

A major role of life may be its ability to construct interconnected spirals. One of the roles of lifewriting in education may be to assist those youthful or unconscious spirals of self to become aware of their storied creation, of the narrative schemata which they are, to gain a sense of

purposefulness—a sense that they too have stories within them to tell and are themselves important players in a larger story. This is the ego-constructive, empowerment aspect of autobiography which seems to have a direct bearing on the confident performance of teachers in classrooms (Goodson, 1988; Butt, 1991). This is Jung's first half of life.

A second major role of life may be its ability to turn back upon itself in modes I have been struggling to portray throughout this essay. Once the spiral of self becomes aware of itself, it may seek the source of its own gravity (Gunn, 1982) in a recoil against time making of life an endless labyrinth, as portrayed in chapter 5. This is autobiography in which the "auto" is thrown into doubt. It is an attempt to break the hold of the self through which it is written by remembering in a mythopoeic, epistrophic manner, as exemplified in the fictional autobiographies of James Joyce or Zora Neale Hurston.

This is the very movement into invisible metamorphosis which Brown has called the "Dionysian ego" (1959) or the awakening of *Love's Body* (1966). Action and emotion spring from another, more primary source. Micklem (1979) portrays the flight of Hermes and his magic cap which renders psyche invisible as necessary to escape the stasis of psyche frozen by the "intolerable image." Alchemically, such an awareness is represented by opening the floodgates of the unconscious upon the "hydrophobic dog" of the habitus, or habitual self. This metamorphic baptism does not render unconsciousness, but opens the self to an array of streams whose source



and end are out of sight—to mercurial inspirations and mercurial emotions.

The deconstructed self may even have attributes of the elusive spirit himself:

Mercurius acts as a fountain of renewal in that he symbolizes a continual flow of interest, a sort of vital attention and evocative awareness, moving to and from the unconscious. This flow appears not only in the superhuman divine heights of the psyche, but also in its depths, extending down into "matter": that is to say, down past the deposits of mankind's past experience to those levels of man's fish-like pre-human past, and to the psychoid processes of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Mercurius as the arcane substance is the transforming link throughout. (Grinnell, p. 22)

In curriculum theory, the fictional journal-writing of Pagano (1991) suggests such possibilities, as do the rewrites of Grumet (1991), though whether the value is placed on a dramatic—or Dionysian—self is very much in doubt. Perhaps the evanescent blueprints of Pinar's architect comes closest to actually opening the habitus to the self-forgetful, mercurial journey into soul and—who knows?—beyond.

A Dionysian self, suggested by Brown (1959), to liberate the id from repression through *direct action*, is already to be entering the territory of the sacred, as suggested by Eliade in *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1954). This journey cannot, I think, be imposed on anyone, whether in the second half of life or not. Outward-looking ego-clingers cannot be forced to see their own transparency, though it often relentlessly reveals itself. This may be "seeing through" or even deconstruction—lifewriting which "is very hard to stay with" (Hillman, 1983b, p. 63)—but it is also a way once aligned with that

which was designated as the sacred: Rife with paradoxes to the outward-lookers, as indicated by the sacred path which is constructed of contradiction:

But Zen's way of viewing or evaluating things differs from the outward way of intellection. Zen would not object to the possibility of an "unconscious conscious" or a "conscious unconscious"—therefore, not the awakening of a new consciousness but consciousness coming to its own unconscious. (Suzuki, 1954/64, p. 197).

This has not been the mandate of education, of course: not psychoanalysis, not imaginal dialogues, not deconstruction, and certainly not anything smacking of the sacred. Schools were firmly constructed within the myth of progress—outward-looking in a one-way time—as though even such a secular myth did not have archetypal themes behind it. T. S. Eliot (1936) felt that even in our most mundane theorizing we are involved in ultimates:

Questions of education are frequently discussed as if they bore no relation to the social system in which and for which the education is carried on. This is one of the commonest reasons for the unsatisfactoriness of the answers. It is only within a particular social system that a system of education has any meaning. If education today seems to deteriorate, if it seems to become more and more chaotic and meaningless, it is primarily because we have no settled and satisfactory arrangement of society, and because we have both vague and diverse opinions about the kind of society we want. Education is a subject which cannot be discussed in a void: our questions raise other questions, social, economic, financial, political. And the bearings are on more ultimate problems even than these: to know what we want in education we must know what we want in general, we derive our theory of education from our philosophy of life. The problem turns out to be a religious problem. (pp. 184, 185)

At the time of the above writing, of course, Eliot was prepared to return the Western world to a Roman Catholic empire. I am not suggesting a

desecularization of curriculum. As soon as we have a religion on which the majority agree, there is, as always, bound to be those who become victimized by it. I wish to observe, however, that our memory reaches back until its solid empirical present wavers and it finds itself forgetting. It may be said to be forgetting into Memory as a sort of gravity, that is, in its oblivion it finds itself remembered. Krell (1978) says that "with diligence and practice I can remember what I never believed I could remember; with greater diligence, and after much practice, I can also fail to remember. The 'can' confronts a 'cannot'. In remembrance, as in perception, man is neither sovereign nor subject, neither absolute activity nor total passivity" (p. 142).

I realize I am verging close with my talk of *anima mundi* and archetypes to a transcendental conceptualization of the place of memory in autobiographical theorizing. I have attempted not to translate the transcendental to the empirical but only to allow my mythopoeic memory to explore itself. Krell notes that, beyond that, to claim any assurance is to lose the path of phenomenology:

Suffice it to say that phenomenology of memory must avoid the pitfalls of both empiricism and transcendentalism. It must elaborate its own methods for the description and analysis of memory sequences as it progresses, without the illusory supports of empirically confirmable fact or ultimate evidence (p. 142).

And suffice to say that the advocates of some form of lifewriting in curriculum and curriculum theory may also "neither be sovereign nor subject" and are driven into their own assumptions of memory because of the unique

environments and phenomena of their experience. The diversity within this burgeoning field of curriculum theory must be understood in this light only as supporting the highest ideals of education as explorative and courageous. Autobiography in education can only proceed within the reaches of the most oblivious tolerance because the path is unknown and each explorer will discover different ruins, and this goes for autobiographical theorists, as well.

The opposition, the resistance, to the return of memory should not be found, it seems to me, within the field of lifewriting researchers in curriculum theory but in the "skyscraper-building" mentality of the institutional ego, itself:

A university isn't just a place, and a school isn't just a building. It's a collective system with its own systematic unconsciousness which makes each person in school unconscious in a collective way, and usually about the institution itself. . . . That's what I mean by corruption in training institutes: getting caught in a terrible unconsciousness, all the while pretending to be developing consciousness and guiding soul. It's not that I'm clean and uncorrupt or holy. . . . It's just that I'm wary. I don't know how to keep the eros alive in an institution. (Hillman, 1983b, p. 34)

Guggenbühl-Craig (1980) understands eros as the difference between the soldier as mercenary murderer or idealist, between the "trickster" as common cheat or con-artist and the playful unveiler of novelty and surprise, and between the teacher who expects adherence to his demonstration of established truths and the teacher who also learns and shapeshifts in response to the life of the students. "It is Eros who makes the gods—the archetypes—loving, creative, and involved. . . . As far as we mortals are concerned, gods are neutral, inhuman, distanced, and cold. Only

when they are combined with Eros do we sense their movement, do they become creative, intimate, and stimulating" (p. 27).

The work now being done to recover personal memory, to discover an epistrophic anamnesis, may be the telos of an eros acting synchronistically through our shifty unconsciousness to keep itself alive within educational institutions: to promote *amor fati* and return to the world.

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## APPENDIX: THE FUTURE OF TIME

One of the most disturbing and fascinating suggestions to emerge from this essay is that memory in its farther reaches is not a human faculty at all, but a primary force of the world, akin to gravity. In this sense, everything we do, think, say, or perceive is in process *through* memory. Our sense of self comes to us only as we remember it. Our lives are forever dissociated from the "moment": an immediacy of awareness through the veil of the past. We live, it seems, through a sort time-delay in which self and world are recognized and emplaced before perception is allowed to occur.

Now, with Stephen Hawking (1988) suggesting that the universe is not expanding but contracting, that is, heading toward its ultimate destiny as unbounded energy, the whole question of humanity's fate, *amor fati*, and the eternal return seem to demand another way of looking at memory and "eternal objects," but even more importantly: our metaphysical assumptions about time are opened for deconstruction. As David Wood (1989) foresees: "Prediction is an uncertain art, but I would venture the suggestion that our century-long 'linguistic turn' will be followed by a spiraling return to time as the focus and horizon of all our thought and experience" (p. xi). The deconstruction of the metaphysics of time, time as thought, may open the way for the "moment," as Wood says, "in ways that break utterly with representation" (p. xi). This would shatter the myth of progress and schools would need to be reconceptualized as spaces to experience *élan vital*.

## **VITA**

**Gregory Michael Nixon was born in the village of Leader, Saskatchewan, in the country of Canada on February 18, 1950. He grew toward a career in hay-baling until he was transferred to Concordia, a St. John's Lutheran boarding school in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, at the beginning of his 10th grade. Here he developed a passion for archaic myth, especially Greek. He majored in Philosophy at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta where he received a B.A., then travelled in Greece and Turkey for several years. Back in Canada, he received his education diploma from the University of Alberta in Edmonton then went on to teach Drama and English for 6 years in high schools in Jasper and Crowsnest Pass, Alberta. Returning to Lethbridge, he spent 7 years instructing adult upgraders in English and Social Studies on the Peigan Indian Reservation for the Lethbridge Community College, as well as receiving his M. Ed. from the University of Lethbridge in 1990. From here, he took his interests in philosophy, literature, mythology, and curriculum to the curriculum theory section of the department of Curriculum and Instruction at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S.A. From there, the roads branch out unknown, at least to him.**



DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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**Major Field:** Education

**Title of Dissertation:** Autobiographical Amnesia: Memory, Myth,  
Curriculum

**Approved:**

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